ANGLING.

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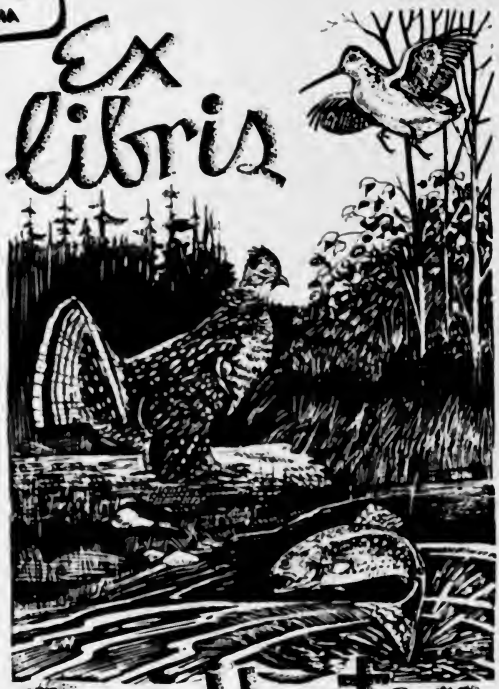

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ANGLING.

BY

FRANCIS FRANCIS,

Author of "A Book on Angling," &c. &c.

"I care not a jot,
I envy no lot,
So I have a rod and can fish."

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON: HORACE COX, 346, STRAND, W.C.

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Preface to the Second Edition.

In producing a second edition of this work I have no great changes to announce. I have endeavoured to perfect the instructions as to bottom fishing, though there has been no very striking improvement worth note of late years, and I have striven to simplify somewhat the rudiments to young anglers taking to trout fishing. The size and shape of the first edition was somewhat awkward for the convenience of carriage, and that I have seen fit to alter accordingly.

Francis Francis.

The Firs, Twickenham,
1883.

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Preface to the First Edition.

EVERY book should have a *raison d'être*, and it might be thought by some persons superfluous that I should have written another and a less comprehensive work after having written a book which contains so full an account of the art in every branch as "A Book on Angling," published by Messrs. Longman, and now in its fourth edition. The popularity which that work has attained might very well satisfy all my desires, but I have been told many times that my "Book on Angling" has not touched a very large class of anglers comprehended in those who cannot afford to pay so much as 15*s.* for a guide to their favourite amusement. Owing to the manner in which "A Book on Angling" is got up, and the expense incurred in producing the coloured plates—all of which are of necessity done by hand—there was no possibility of bringing it within the means of the large body of anglers whom I have referred to, and I have been asked again and again to write a book of a somewhat less extensive nature and without the coloured plates, or the long list of salmon flies contained in my first work. I have now yielded to this demand, and I trust that the present work may fulfil the requirements of the persons for whom it is written.

A reviewer of my "Book on Angling" lately, in the

course of what was upon the whole a very favourable and even kind review, in one of the principal morning papers, said that I was rather opinionated—in saying which he stated neither more nor less than the truth, and I plead guilty to the charge; for, in writing books on angling, I have endeavoured to write them as far as possible from my own experience, and to avoid, as far as I could, giving a mere *réchauffé* from old angling works. Indeed, I have striven to borrow as little as possible from any one, merely giving what I know to be the ordinary methods and practices in vogue as regards the sport of angling in these later times. I hardly see how a person endeavouring to do this could be other than opinionated. The question appears to me to be, not whether I am opinionated, but whether the opinions I have expressed are the best that the angler can follow. Now I take upon me to say that I have endeavoured to give the best methods and plans of angling, and that, in doing so, I never have hesitated—and I should take shame to myself if I had—to give full credit to the authors of those plans for their inventions, be they whom they may; and, in doing so, I venture even further to say, that I have often taken hints from brother anglers where their ideas appeared good, and given them the credit of them, but with whom on many other points I have no sympathy or agreement whatever. Where I have been able to speak solely from my own experience, and where that has seemed to me the best to draw from, I have not hesitated to do so. No doubt it would have been far easier for me to have said Izaak Walton says so and so, Salter recommends this, Ronald advises that, and "Ephemera" the other. But angling has made large strides since the days of those writers; and though in many instances their experience and advice still stands

good, yet in many others it is simply obsolete and useless. In the present book, with very few exceptions, I have drawn almost entirely from my own stores. The tackle from my box, which I constantly use, and the flies from my books which I find the most killing, I have simply taken and described, and, consequently, in this book I fear I shall be found more opinionated than ever; but if any one will show me a better rod, line, tackle, or fly, than any I recommend, and I find on trial that it is so, I shall never be slow to adopt it, and to recognise not only its usefulness, but the services rendered by the inventor to the cause of angling. For I trust, whenever I am called upon to lay down the pen, that no man will ever be able to say, "He did not act fairly either to his contemporaries or to those he drew his information from;" for that I hold to be one of the most disgraceful charges which can be brought against an author. But if I strive to behave fairly to others, I can hardly be blamed if I am tenacious of my own rights. In angling, as in all other matters, one cannot do better than stick to the Church Catechism, and to "do to all men as you would they should do unto you;" and I think that any author who has adopted and striven to carry out this motto purely and simply, may look back on his career without regret.

FRANCIS FRANCIS.

The Firs, Twickenham,
1877.

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ANGLING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—BOTTOM FISHING.

Who first invented the art of angling it would be very hard to say. Probably in all ages of the world the necessities of mankind induced them to practise it in a more or less rude fashion. When Dame Juliana Berners wrote about it, hard upon four hundred years ago, to judge by her illustrations and descriptions, it was rude enough in all conscience; and even in the days of Walton and Cotton, more than a hundred and fifty years later, it was scarcely in a condition to fulfil the more modern requirements of the present century. Since those days hundreds of books on angling have been written, and in the present time they appear to issue from the press at the rate of about one per month or even more; and within the last quarter of a century the art has made far greater strides towards improvement than it ever did in four times the period since Dame Juliana's day. And I fear that the schoolmaster has been abroad, and the fish have become

well educated too, so that if any of the old practitioners were now to appear on the banks of their favourite trout streams they would find their skill and their tackle alike unequal to the capture of those "trouts of 20in." &c., which we read about so constantly in their works.

The art of angling is divided into three sections, "bottom fishing," or fishing with a bait on the bottom; mid-water fishing, comprehended principally in spinning and trolling; and surface fishing, which is chiefly practised in fly-fishing.

We will commence at the lower round of the ladder, and take bottom fishing first. Bottom fishing is the most primitive style, no doubt. We all more or less began with bottom fishing, and pitched minnows and sticklebacks out on the grass, with a pin, thread, and worm with as much interest and delight, and perhaps a good deal more than we now evince in the capture of a two-pound trout, or even of a lordly salmon! Anon promoted to a real halfpenny hook and a withy, the noble gudgeon or the festive roachling became the sweeteners of our existence. The withy was discarded for a sixpenny two-joint hazel rod; until, finally, on some glorious red-letter day—which we all remember so well, and will to the last hour of existence—papa—having heard from Dr. Whackem that Frank was really doing his declensions very creditably indeed considering his age, and had said his 4th prop. of Euclid without a mistake—considering that if he knew the value of two, it would be quite proper that his eldest-born should be equal to one angle at least—prepared a surprise for us; and when we walked into the breakfast parlour on the morning of our twelfth birthday, there sat the dear old man with that noble four-and-sixpenny four-jointed bambooer which we

had so long scanned with anxious infraction of the tenth commandment in the window of the local tackler, who was also a hair-dresser, toy-shopper, stationer, newsman, and tobacconist; and beside it on the table a paper parcel containing a bamboo winder, with a real line and float, and a gut hook. Ah——h! Times have passed since then, and many strokes of good fortune and unexpected luck have happened, but few that gave us such delight as that! With some such appliances the young angler will probably commence his career as a real angler. With a bag of well scoured worms (after a wormey week or so, during which worms have been discovered about the house in unusual places, to the terror of the housemaid and indignation of mamma), he will make his way to brook, river, or pond, and try conclusions with the denizens of the waters. At first he will fish for anything that comes along. As he improves he will go out with a set purpose to catch some particular kind of fish, then he may be said to be on the high road to knowledge.

Bottom Fishing may be practised either from the shore or from a boat. Whichever the angler selects to commence from, he should always remember the cardinal rule, "Study to be quiet." It is an old rule, a very old rule, but it has had the approval of all anglers, from Father Izaak's time down. Be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible. You may catch many kinds of fish either from the land or from a boat; but if you wish to fish for carp, say in still waters, you will find it better to fish from the land, as they are very shy, and the least movement of the boat causing wave or ripple will suffice to make them still more shy. We will suppose, therefore that the angler commences from the shore in still water—say a pond. To do so effectually he will find a good long light rod of some

fourteen or fifteen feet desirable, with which he can swing out a good length of line. To this will be fixed a winch or reel with some thirty yards of line. Suppose he is fishing in four or five feet depth of water, he will be able to fish some three or four and twenty feet from the shore. If he wishes to cast his line still further out he must draw it down from above the second or third ring, as described hereafter, in Nottingham angling, and thus he may get out another eight or ten feet.

As pond fish, and indeed all fish in still water, bite very slowly and nibble a good deal first, the float gives ample warning of a bite to the angler; and he may lay his rod down on the bank without any detriment to his fishing, and resume it as soon as he has a bite. For the more convenient exercise of this plan it is usual to stick a forked stick a yard or so out into the water, so that the butt of the rod and reel rests on the shore, and the body of the rod is supported above the water in the fork of the stick. A light line of fine but strong Derby silk, which will not sink to the bottom too heavily, and so entangle in the weeds, &c., is best. The float may be as light as it possibly can be consistently with the power to fish comfortably—a too light float will sometimes blow about in the wind, and will not swing out well. Three or four shreds of rush tied on the line make a light and very unobtrusive float, and in clear water that is a point worth studying.

The whole of the tackle from some distance above the float to the hook should be of single gut, as fine as can be fished with, considering the strength required. The bait should always rest on the bottom, as pond fish feed chiefly on the bottom: the depth, therefore, between the float and the hook should be somewhat

more than the depth of the water, and the lowest shot with which the line is loaded, to balance the float, should be at least a foot above the hook. There is another advantage in the bait resting on the bottom, and that is, that is its natural position, and it does not thus challenge the suspicion of the fish; and as the gut, which is in immediate connection with the hook, rests on the bottom too, it is not seen. That most cunning of all fish, the carp, may be taken in this way when it would be hopeless to fish for him with the bait hanging just off the bottom, for he could then see the gut at once, and also the shots that weight the line, and probably the float above; and if the float is of a nice white and vermilion, or some other dazzling rainbow colour, it will afford the old carp a capital text on which to preach an instructive sermon to the young ones on scarlet abominations and the Lady of Babylon.

To fish in this way, however, you must have a clear bottom and free from weeds, otherwise the bait will sink amongst the weeds and be hidden. If the pond, therefore, has any gravelly places, or hard clay bottoms, then if they are not clear of weeds, you should get some one to rake spaces. A very large space is not required—one or two spots, some 30ft. or 40ft. square, will suffice; of course, the larger they are in reason the better chance for more fish, but if places like these be cleaned out between the weeds, here the big carp and tench will wallow and feed; and if before fishing the angler baits such spots for a few days with a good store of ground bait, such as malt, rice, pearl barley, boiled potatoes, or worms and gentles, so as to accustom the fish to feed there, he will much increase his sport. If he is not able to do this, and has only say one day's fishing at his disposal, his best plan is—first to

pick out two or three of the best of such spots as he can see, and fix his forked sticks; to plumb the depth, and keep an accurate register of it in each spot so as not to have to do it again when he wants to fish, and then, throwing in a few handfuls of bait at each place, to begin with the one first baited, and to vary from one to the other as sport may counsel. To plumb the depth, fix a leaden plummet on the hook, then swing the plummet out to the spot you want to fish. Let the line stand upright in the water, the plummet just touching the bottom; mark the place where the surface of the water cuts the line, and fix the float accordingly, taking a half hitch of the line round the quill to prevent slipping. The best sized hook for this sort of fishing will be one of about No. 7 or 8, of the round bend series, as this will take both carp, tench, perch, and even small roach too.

In fishing such places the angler will always find that with such sharp-eyed fish it is as well to have a tree, hedge, bank, or bush at his back, if he can get one, so that his body does not stand out clear against the sky behind him. It is quite astonishing what a difference this makes. I have often seen a trout take a fly within five or six yards of me, I having the high bank at my back, when, if I had been on the bank with the sky at my back he would not have looked at my bait, but would have been off under a stone or weed for shelter. A hurdle propped up on end answers very well for this purpose if there is nothing else naturally placed. It should, however, be put up a week before fishing, to let the fish get accustomed to it.

And now we will suppose the angler—his pitch chosen and baited, his depth plumbed beforehand, his rod all ready—he walks gently down, puts his little stool or

basket behind some tree or bush (for he should never sit on the damp ground), then he baits his hook with a well scoured red worm, covering it completely, and leaving very little more tail hanging off the point than he can help; he next slings the bait out as far as he can into the pond, lays the rod down carefully, resting it on the fork, lights his pipe if he is a smoker, or gets out his book if he is not, and waits. The top of his small quill projects a bare half inch above the surface. "Ha! was that a motion of the float?" "Yes, no doubt of it; there it dipped, and there it bobbed right under water!"—and here the tyro would seize his rod and do something desperate, when he would lose his bite and scare his fish for his pains; but the experienced angler merely puts down his book, takes up the rod very softly, so as not to disturb the float in the least, and waits. The float keeps on shaking and bobbing, now dipping down well under water, and now darting an inch or two one way or the other, and at length, as a reward for his patience, the float sinks slowly down, assuming a horizontal position, and sails steadily off six inches under water. Then is the time, and a short jerk of the angler's rod top arrests the thief, who, mighty indignant and a little alarmed, darts off at full speed. He must then be handled and played according to his size, the angler's object being to get him away from his pitch, and to make as little disturbance as possible, so as not to alarm the other fish. A capable landing net, with a good long light handle so as to reach well out beyond the margin, is useful.

It is desirable to make as little noise in stumping about the bank as possible, as the still water easily conveys the slightest sound or vibration; and the angler should also take care as much as possible to keep within the shelter of his

tree, bush, or hurdle. If fishing for carp exclusively, paste will be found a better bait than worms for the hook, but all this will be treated under the head of "carp," and in the proper place. After taking a fish or two the best plan, if the angler observes that they are scared at all, will be to throw in a handful or two of bait, and to go to the next pitch, and so on to the next when the same occurs, or back to the other as he may fancy—thus he will save a good deal of time, and increase his chance of sport.

This is the first and simplest kind of fishing, and, as I have said, is usually the method in which the young angler first breaks ground into the noble art: if a boat is used there is no difference in the method. But if small perch or roach are the aim, then the bait should not be on the ground, but an inch off it, and the angler may, if he has a mind, use a couple of hooks, one six inches above the other.

Bottom fishing in running water is rather more difficult of achievement; and this again is divided into fishing with a moving, and fishing with a still bait. The moving bait is either allowed to trundle along the bottom without a float, in which case the angler strikes by feel (this is described under worm fishing for trout), or it is attached to a float which is weighted, and the line plumbed, so that the float shall carry the hook just off the bottom, now and then perhaps touching it, or "tripping," as it is termed, and the float projecting half an inch above the surface. This travels along down stream, and whenever the float bobs or sinks under the water, the angler (unlike "still" fishing) strikes at once with a short, sharp, upward jerk of the wrist, for the fish bite much quicker in running than in still water. Little time is afforded them to nibble at and play with the bait as it floats away down stream from them, if they do not secure it in their mouths at once.

So that when the angler sees his float bob under water he may be pretty sure that most of the hook is inside the fish's mouth.

In float fishing in running water from the bank the angler keeps the top of the rod immediately above the float, and so follows it all down his swim, so as to be able to strike truly and at once, and thus he seldom has or wants more than two or three feet at the most between his rod-point and his float. The rod should be as long as he can comfortably use, but it must be comparatively light, as there is no putting the rod down at this kind of fishing; it must be poised the whole time; and many a time has my arm ached up to the shoulder and my hand grown numb with holding one of these long cane rods common to the Lea. These rods are used of a prodigious length in some instances, even to two or three and twenty feet and when the size of the fish taken with them is considered, it looks as if the angler were using the mast of a young fishing smack; I shall notice them in "roach fishing." In this matter the angler must suit himself to his own convenience and powers. For ordinary bank fishing from twelve to fifteen feet will be found quite long enough. For punt or boat fishing from ten to twelve feet is ample. In choosing a swim the fisherman will be guided by circumstances, such as the time of year, the state of the water, the kind of fish he wants to catch, and so forth—matters which all materially affect his choice.

Some fish lie in much heavier and swifter streams than others, and some in eddies altogether, while in clear water the calm deep-running waters hold the fish, and in a flood they are found in great eddies close under the banks. Experience either of his own or of some friend will determine all this for him. If, however, he

does not know the river, and cannot see the fish, and has no one to ask, then he had better look along the bank and see where the grass is worn from the long standing of feet, where a few grains of bran may be left, or the paper that wrapped the sandwich has been cast aside, and then let him look narrowly about and he will doubtless find a swim. Failing in all this a swim neither too deep nor too shallow, with sheltering weeds not far off, or some place of refuge very handy should be selected. If he selects one or two, and baits them, as advised in still fishing, good! If he can bait them two or three nights before, better still! but in that case he must sleep like a Bristol merchant, with one eye open, or some rival may *accidentally* appropriate the result of his baiting—than which few things in fishing are more exasperating. Some of the puntsmen on the Thames, in places where there is any strong rivalry, sometimes do this. But it is a low, mean thing to do, and only one degree better than picking a man's pocket; indeed, as far as the honourable feeling in the matter goes, it is worse, and I never would permit such a thing, or employ any man who did it; but the rivalry that exists among Thames anglers through club prizes and "weighing in" has caused a good deal of objectionable work in this way. The same care is requisite in bank fishing as in pond fishing—quiet and unobtrusiveness are very essential to sport.

In bottom fishing from a punt the process is slightly different. The pitch being chosen, the punt fixed—on the Thames this is done across the stream; on the Norfolk rivers with the stream; on the Trent slightly askew—the depth is taken, the bait cast in (this usually is made up in large balls either mixed with clay or without); a rod of from ten to twelve feet is used, and as much line as the

length of the rod, or a little more, is let off above the float. The float is then drawn up close to the boat, and the swim commences, the angler keeping his rod as well over his float as he can. When the float has travelled down stream as far as he can allow it to go, he strikes, in case any fish should snap at it as it rises off the bottom (a very favourite moment) by reason of the tension of the line; then he draws the float and tackle back up stream to the boat, drops it in again, and begins another swim. If he hook a good fish he has to take care that he does not get round the punt pole, in which case grief is usually the result. If two anglers be fishing from the punt, and one hooks a good fish, it is as well that the other should withdraw his line till the fish is landed, lest it should foul and tangle the other's line, and perhaps even get off; and while the fish is disturbing the swim many fish are not likely to bite.

In case of a very large fish, say of ten pounds and upwards, if I am using very fine tackle, I always like to let the punt loose, and, getting below the fish, take him into strange water if possible, where he has no holt or hide to go to, and where he does not know the country. For lack of this I have lost many a noble fish, as a big fish always has a hide, and sooner or later remembers and runs for it, when you may wish him "good day." Float and tackle must be suited as near as possible to the weight and rapidity of the stream, and the angler should never fish with it a shot heavier than is necessary, as extra weight helps to frighten the fish, wears out the rod top, and tires the wrist, for it must be remembered that the angler strikes many thousands of times in the course of a day, and that which is little in itself becomes great by repetition. In very quiet, easy streams, where big roach

and bream still congregate, a light quill or porcupine float, that will only carry about three or four No. 4 shot, is ample, and from this you may go through all grades up to a cork as big as a small carrot, or a large radish, and a dozen or twenty B B shot. After this floats are vanity and are useless, and you must use a ledger.

Stream fishing is, as I have said, subdivided into fishing with a travelling or tripping bait, with or without a float (these I have spoken of) and also with a stationary one, with or without a float. The first of these latter is termed "tight corking," and the latter ledgering or ledger fishing, In tight corking a good heavy float is used, the line is well leaded, and allowed to rest on the bottom, and the float therefore is set six or eight inches or more too deep. The bait rests on the bottom kept in its place by the shots, the float is held up so that it cannot be carried under water by the stream, and as soon as a fish comes up and mumbles the bait the float gives warning of it.

If the angler likes it better, a combination of ledger and float can be made, which is the *acmè* of tight corking and one of the most killing methods employed. It is simply to use a light ledger lead instead of fixed shots. What the ledger is I will now unfold. The cut of the tackle may be seen at Plate 1, Fig. 1. A bullet or a flat lead with a clean round hole through it is the lead—this lies upon the bottom. The line runs through it, and on the hook side of it at any space from two to four feet—I like a good length, it gives the bait more play—a piece of wood or a shot is fixed to prevent the bullet or lead coming down on the hook. Thus you can weigh the lead two or three feet from the hook and bait, and it can get no further. Now when the line lies free on the ground, if anything touches the hook,

PLATE I.

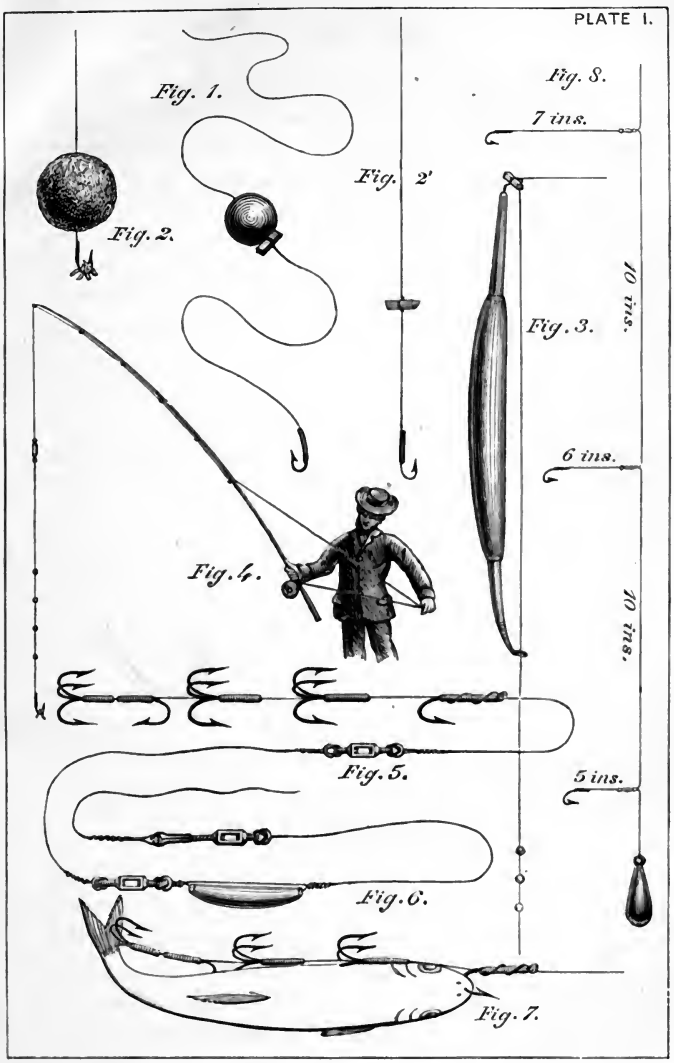


Fig. 1.
Fig. 2.
Fig. 2'
Fig. 3.
Fig. 4.
Fig. 5.
Fig. 6.
Fig. 7.
Fig. 8.
7 ins.
10 ins.
6 ins.
10 ins.
5 ins.

it is felt at the rod point as sharply if not more so than if there were no lead, because the line between the lead and rod is kept tight. When a fish bites it is felt instantly, an inch or two of line is yielded him to let him get the bait and hook well in his mouth, and at about the third try you strike, smartly lifting lead and all in the stroke. A light pistol bullet with a hole in it is used in tight corking. N.B.—This is a capital method of fishing for carp in rivers. There is one other way of stationary bait fishing, and that is by what is called the clay ball. A single hook, or sometimes a small triangle is used, or bit of stick half an inch long tied on the line a foot or eighteen inches above the hook. The hook baited more often than not with six or seven gentles, a bit of clay and bran is worked up as big as an orange, a handful of gentles put inside it, the cross bit of wood in the line buried in it, the clay worked about it, the line wound into it once or twice till the hook bait only just protrudes from the ball (some even bury it in the ball, and let the fish rout it out, but this is quite needless delay), and the ball hanging on the line is dropped to the bottom. The gentles wriggle their way out of the clay. The fish come up and pick them off, and in doing so rarely miss the hook. As soon as a bite is felt—and it is astonishing how distinctly you feel one—a strike sticks the hook in the fish and shakes off the clay ball. A cut of this tackle is given in Plate 1, Fig. 2.

I have mentioned the method of bottom fishing pursued by Norfolk and Trent anglers. The former differs little from that pursued by the Thames anglers, save in the position in which the punt is moored, which is lengthwise with the stream. The two anglers facing either bank—a plan which avoids the rough boil and bubble caused by

the Thames plan of mooring across stream—though it is quite possible that this boil and bubble serves to hide the angler from the fish, and to make them bolder in their biting—and this when the water is only five or six feet deep is certainly an advantage. In Norfolk, however, the swims run from ten to sixteen or more feet in depth, and there is no need for any concealment at that depth. In other respects, owing to the depth, they use somewhat longer rods, and heavier tackle than would be employed on the Thames, but there is no other peculiarity in their method. On the Trent the system is quite different from that on the Thames. They do not as a rule fish short swims—only the length of the rod and line. If fishing from a boat they take very long swims. The bait—mostly worms or greaves—is thrown in loose, not in balls; the depth plumbed, and the float set, so that the bait may drag the ground, and the swim is commenced. As the float travels onward, line is constantly paid off the reel, so as to give as slight a check to the tackle as need be until the bait has travelled down stream the requisite distance, which may be anything, from thirty or forty yards to double that distance. Thus the hook bait is sure to travel over the greater portion of the ground bait, which it does not in the restricted swim so often used on the Thames, in the which plan most of the bait is eaten far below the swim, where the fish do not have a chance of seeing the hook, and indeed may be thoroughly gorged before ever they are attracted within its range at all. For fish are not drawn up from a distance so quickly as some folks suppose. It takes several nights steady baiting to draw fish up from a distance to some new quarters. Of course, if they are on or about the spot in any quantity already, it does not take long to get them together.

Thus it will be seen that the Nottingham or Trent plan of covering sixty or even seventy yards of stream is ten times more *captivating* than the old Thames plan, and it is now, for barbel, bream, and chub, commonly adopted on the Thames. The Trent tackle is peculiar. The lines are of the finest Derby silk, so as to lie lightly on the water, and not to impede the quickness of the strike. The reels turn on a well finished spindle, and a touch sets them twirling with wonderful rapidity,* and though they are very suitable for the purpose for which they are wanted, and in the hands of an experienced person work perfectly, yet in the hands of a tyro they are a stumbling block and a snare too. They overrun, so that every turn they are set running, the line gets all into a rumble tumble and tangle. What the young angler has to learn is, while holding the rod with one hand, so that it can be pressed against the edge of the reel at will, so as to stop the running of the line instantly, with the other hand by regular and quick touches of the little finger, to spin the reel round so as to give off line freely to the drag of the float, and at the same time to regulate the pace. This is not easy, and nothing but practice, and a good deal of practice, will do it.

The casting of a float, bait, or ledger, to a distance off the reel, is not easy either. It must be practised, and a good deal practised too, to accomplish it neatly and well. No explanation is of any use; after seeing it done, and noting it as well as he can, the aspirant

* Many anglers use these reels for a variety of purposes, and it is often essential that they should run very freely indeed, and at the slightest touch. A correspondent in the *Field* lately urged for this purpose the necessity of having the spindle thin and very true.

must practise—practise—practise! At first he will be dangerous to himself and everybody near, and instead of his float and hook landing on the swim where he wants it, it will be more likely to land in his arm, or his ear, or eye, or somebody else's, where no one wants it; but he will soon mend, and a week will see him well on the road to expertness. It is quite necessary to accomplish this well to be an expert bank fisher on the Trent; the swim, particularly in barbelling, often lying out beyond the reach of the rod, and requiring very neat and exact casting. To fish a swim at such a distance is the acme of perfection and skill in bank fishing; because, having once baited and plumbed your swim, you must always keep in the same line of country so as to be at the same depth, and your float must travel steadily down the long swim (though bank swims are not nearly as long, as a rule, as boat swims), and line must be given out so that there may be no lateral pull or wrench on the float, whereby it may be diverted from its proper course; and this is not easy, indeed, with a bad wind and a rainy day it is almost impossible.

These swims, too, are often deep, and in order to cast the tackle a float called a slider is employed. This has a wire loop at top and bottom, through which the line slides freely. The depth being plumbed, a bit of india-rubber elastic is tied on the line at the requisite distance. This presents sufficient obstruction to prevent the line sliding further than is required through the small eyes of the float, but not sufficient to prevent its being drawn pretty easily through the larger eye of the rod point and the rings thereof. Thus, when the tackle is lifted out of the water the float slides down to the topmost shot or weight, and rests there. When dropped in the water it floats and slides up the line

till the top eye meets the rubber, the bait and shots sinking to the bottom.

This is the greatest modern invention in bottom-fishing. Holes of any depth, and at any (reasonable) distance from the shore may be fished with it, and even in slightly variable depths the float, with management, will do a good deal to accommodate itself to the various depths. A cut of the slider is shown in Plate 1, Fig. 3. The lighter and easier method of fishing from the bank on the Trent is called "dacing." I think it by far the pleasantest method of bank fishing. The rod and tackle are lighter than in the last, and the swim is rarely more than some twice the length of the rod from the shore. If it is a yard or two beyond, and is not to be reached by the ordinary swing of the rod—as the tackle is too light to cast it well off the reel, and the line will not hang loose or lie on the ground without kinking, the Trent fisher takes hold of the line somewhere up between the third and fourth rings, and enough line being left to swing out the tackle, as much line is drawn off the reel as can be kept tight by the left hand being extended backwards. The swing being made, the line is let go by the left hand, and flies out, giving two or three yards of extra length to the cast, and this may be increased by taking the line from higher up the rod. For an illustration of the method see Plate 1, Fig. 4. I have mentioned previously that this cast is very useful in pond fishing in getting out more line than you could otherwise cast. It is useful also in minnow spinning for trout.

CHAPTER II.

MID-WATER FISHING.

THE second division of fishing is that of mid-water fishing, and this may be sub-divided between spinning and live baiting. Taking live baiting first as being linked with float fishing; this is practised in two ways, with a float and without a float; live baiting with a float is employed for taking pike, perch, and sometimes trout. The float and weight of the tackle are proportioned to the size of the bait. When a large bait is used a heavy weight is required to keep it down in the water, as the tendency of all fish, when hooked, is to strike upwards towards the surface. It is often necessary, when the fish to be caught are very large, to use large dace and roach of three and four to the pound as baits; and in this case the float is made of cork, and it is as large as a good-sized Bergamot pear. In this style of fishing, which is chiefly for pike, one bait will be found enough; and it is desirable to have a swivel between the float and the hooks, in order if the fish turns round much that he should not twist and hang the line up, as often happens without this; and it is as well to have another swivel to attach the tackle to the reel line, so that the reel or running line may not be entangled with the tackle. Also it is desirable that the running line should

be kept as near the surface as possible, so that it may not sink and become caught in the weeds below, and so check the free motion of the bait or the run of the fish. To effect this fix a small piece of cork on the line, a yard or two, if possible, above the float. The bait must be allowed to swim rather below mid-water unless the water is very deep, when it should be placed nearer to the bottom. The object is to fix it so that it may be seen best over the largest area of the bottom; and of course the depth and colour of the water must be duly considered, as in thick water, unless the bait is put pretty close to the fish, he will not see it at all.

For float fishing for perch, or even trout, a lighter tackle and float is used. That used for trout must, of course, be suited to the size of the trout. For perch the tackle would be a float equal to carrying a couple of minnows which should be set at such a depth that the lowest minnow shall clear the bottom by an inch or two, and the one above, shall hang so as to be about from fourteen to eighteen inches above the bottom. When I come to jack and perch fishing, I shall give a closer account of how these tackles are to be used. Another species of live-bait fishing is by means of a paternoster. This is simply a gimp or gut line, according as it is used for pike or perch, with a plummet of lead on the bottom, and with two or three hooks as the depth of water, &c., requires, these hooks being baited with a small fish—minnow, gudgeon, dace, or what not. The plummet is cast into the water, and, sinking to the bottom, the line is held tight, so that the least touch of a fish can be felt; and as soon as it is supposed that the fish has the bait in his mouth, the angler strikes sharply. A plan of a paternoster is given in Plate 1, Fig. 5. Occasionally a live

bait is put upon a single hook, or a small triangle, and, with two or three shot, just enough to sink it to mid-stream, line is paid out, and the bait allowed to go where it will. This is chiefly done in trout fishing.

The next division in mid-water fishing is in the arts of spinning and trolling. Spinning is practised thus: a small fish is taken—minnow, gudgeon, bleak or dace chiefly, and is fixed upon a series of hooks called "the flight," so that the tail is slightly crooked. These are then hung on to a tackle, divided in short lengths by two or more swivels, which is called the trace. This is weighted with lead to sink it to mid-water. The tackle is then jerked to a distance into the stream, and is drawn in to the shore or boat by short draws of the left hand, the right holding the rod; and as the bait comes shooting along through the mid-water, the crook in the tail causes it to revolve rapidly, the swivels permitting it to do so easily without twisting up the line. This attracts the fish, who dash at the bait and are caught by the hooks. Trolling or dead gorge fishing is a method employed exclusively for pike; and that, too, only when they are in large weed beds or places so obstructed with rubbish that neither of the other methods can be employed; a long thin plummet of lead is used with a twisted wire running through it, to one end of which is a loop, and the other a pair of hooks opening di*v*ersely. The loop end of the wire is then thrust into the fish's mouth, down through its stomach, and out at the tail. The hooks stand out pretty close on each side of the mouth. The tail is tied on to the wire by a lap or two of silk, and the lead, &c., is concealed in the belly of the bait. This is hung on to a tackle by a swivel, and is dropped here and there into the holes between the weeds, and played up and down by

jerks at the rod point, and as it sinks, shooting to the bottom, is now and then seized by a pike, who having been allowed from five to ten minutes to pouch or swallow the bait is hooked and hauled out to the best of the fisher's ability.

CHAPTER III.

SURFACE OR FLY FISHING.

This is the most skilful and artistic method of fishing of any. It is divided into fishing with the real, and fishing with the artificial fly. In the first method, a real fly, as a Mayfly, shorn fly, bluebottle, or some other large fly, is used; a fine hook is carefully passed through the thorax, and the bait is then dropped or cast on the surface of the water. In the first case the mode of working the fly is what is termed "dibbing," or "daping." The angler—with a line about half the length of the rod, and with a good long light rod, a yard or so of fine gut, and a hook suited to his bait—notes some spot where a fish is rising, and going cautiously behind any bush or stump that will shelter him from the eyes of the fish, he protrudes his rod gently over the water, and allows his bait to fall on the surface of the water about two or three feet, or more if need be, above the fish, and lets the stream bear it down over the fish's head; if the fish rises he gives him just two seconds to get the bait or fly well in his mouth, then strikes, not too hard, and gets his fish out with as little disturbance as possible. This method of fishing is used chiefly for trout, though it is also employed for chub, when a cockchafer or grasshopper, &c., is used. The great thing to study is concealment from the fish. There

is, however, another method of daping, called "blow-line fishing," which is employed in the open, away from bushes. In this case, of course, the angler has to stand at a distance from the fish. To this end a long rod is generally employed, often from eighteen to twenty-two feet long. A piece of line called the blow line, and made of the lightest floss silk, and about twice the length of the rod, is employed; to the lower end is fastened a link or two of fine gut, and a light hook. The fly, usually a Mayfly (or even two), is put on the hook, the rod held upright, the angler having his back to the wind; as soon as the line is released it is carried by the wind away from the angler; and when well extended over the water, the fisherman lowers the point of the rod until the flies fall upon the surface of the water some distance away, where they are allowed to drift naturally over the fish. In this way the angler can cover a fish seventeen or eighteen or more yards away from him.

Then there is the plan of casting the natural fly; certainly one of the most artistic methods of employing a natural bait at all, and not easy to accomplish thoroughly. An ordinary single-handed fly rod and line is used, with three yards of gut and a light hook; one or two flies are put on, and standing with his back to the wind, and the line between his left finger and thumb, just above the hook, and as much loose line waving in the air as he thinks he can cast; the angler waves his rod backwards and forwards once or twice to swing the length of line clear, and then, making his cast, lets go the hook and away goes the bait to its destination; it is allowed to go down stream to the full length of the line, and is then pulled up and re-cast; when from frequent immersions the bait is destroyed or the line wet and heavy, a new bait must be put on, or the

line allowed a few minutes to dry. The frequent spoiling or whipping-off of baits is the great objection to this method.

Fishing with the artificial fly is, perhaps, the most popular kind of fishing practised in this kingdom; thousands of anglers never practise any other kind of fishing. I need hardly describe what an artificial fly is, but for the few who are quite uninitiated I may merely say that it is an imitation of a fly, made of various materials, chiefly silks, fur, and feathers, which is fixed on to a hook. This is then cast to a distance on the surface of the water, and, being drawn or carried by the stream gently floating along, is mistaken by the fish for some live fly or other insect, and the fish rises to take it, when, before he can discover the cheat, the hook is twitched sharply into his jaw, and he is translated speedily to another element. A good variety of fish are taken by the artificial fly, chiefly trout and salmon, and all the other species of the salmon, &c., as sea trout, grayling, and charr; more or less chub, and dace, and sometimes roach, perch, and pike, and even eels and flounders have been known to take a fly. These are the various methods employed by the lawful brothers of the angle, in their endeavours to capture the fish of the British Islands. I proceed now to deal with each fish and its mode of capture separately.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GUDGEON (*Cyprinus Gobio*).

Setting aside minnows, bull-heads, loaches, and stickle-backs, and such small game—for I have known a treatise to have been written on the correct method of capture of the last noble quarry, and if I remember aright, a pickle bottle played a prominent part in the process. For my eldest son, at the tender age of eight, wrote a treatise on the above sport, as he styled it, for the "Information of his Young Friends." I repeat, "setting aside" all this, the gudgeon is usually the first quarry of the young angler, that is always providing he lives where they are found. The gudgeon is gregarious, and where you catch one you may catch others, sometimes in large numbers; indeed, I have known as many as ten dozen of gudgeons caught at one pitch. The gudgeon runs to six or seven inches in length, but seven inches is a large one. The largest I have seen are (or rather were, for I have seen none of late years) found in the river Itchen, in Hampshire. The bait which they prefer is a small red worm, or cockspur, as it is called in Trentshire; they will take a gentle or any other small insect, but nothing is so attractive to them as a red worm. Red worms may be found in old leaf mould or vegetable refuse, and it is a

very good plan to have a heap of this mixed with some very rotten old manure, covered over with a bit of carpet to keep it moist in the summer. The worms will soon breed in it, and the angler can then choose what he requires from time to time. They keep well for a week or more, in a few bits of old rag or rotten net, which is the best thing to scour and cleanse them in, provided they are kept fairly moist and in a cool place.

The tackle to use for gudgeon fishing is a light taper cork float, proportioned to the stream, and a yard or two of tolerably fine gut. Plumb the depth, and set the float so that the bait shall just drag the bottom, the hook must be a small one, number 9, 10, or 11; the rod, of course, must depend upon whether you are fishing from a punt or from the bank. The ordinary rods used for these means will do, and last, but not least, the angler must have a large heavy iron rake, with a long stout handle, to rake the bottom with. All else being ready, the bottom, for a space of some two or three square yards, is vigorously raked, so as to disturb the sand and earthy particles, and to send them down stream in a cloud. This attracts the gudgeon, who expect to find fresh food in the freshly turned up gravel, and they flock to the spot from some distance down. Then, the raking finished, the angler drops in his tackle, and if the gudgeon are there, and are feeding, his float will not move a yard before it will bob down with a dash that there is no mistaking. A quick short stroke and a brief pull will bring the little brown fellow wriggling to the top, when a touch at the bait to re-settle it on the hook is all that is required, for the same bait will often take six or seven or more fish before it is worn out. When the fish begin to grow tired of biting, another turn of the rake may bring them on afresh for a short time, and even a

third rake will sometimes, when they are plentiful, pay fairly; but it is seldom that two rakings do not suffice to bring to hook all that mean to bite. Perch often come into the swim, and are taken when gudgeon fishing. Indeed, should the presence of a perch be suspected, by reason of a sudden cessation of biting, it is as well to put on a larger worm, or to have a paternoster with a minnow on handy, so as to get rid of Mr. Perch, who sadly disturbs the equanimity of your clients. Dace, too, are often taken in the gudgeon swim, and indeed this method of fishing is often used purely for dace; in the same swim with the gudgeon, too, is often captured the Pope.

THE POPE OR RUFFE (*Perca cernua*).

If there be a deepish still eddy by the side of your gudgeon swim, and a bank or bough beside it, there you will probably (in the River Thames, at least) find good store of popes. Like his great namesake, the Pope, "he leads a happy life." The angler does not often trouble him, for he is of little value; and if caught by accident he usually gets turned back again. Netsmen will not be troubled with him either, as he fetches nothing either as a live bait or for edible purposes, though the small amount of flesh on the Pope is very sweet and wholesome, and like that of the gudgeon. It is a curious little fish, and though so little sought for does not seem to increase much; indeed, in the Thames, I doubt if it has not, of late years, diminished. It lives exceedingly well in small ponds. I have had one in a bait pond for above a twelvemonth, and it has grown considerably; and, let who will starve, he is always fat and hearty. Pope are not common in English rivers, and not a great deal is known of them.

They are said to have been first discovered by Dr. Caius, the founder of Caius College.

THE BLEAK (*Cyprinus alburnus*).

This lively silvery little fish is the exemplification in fish life of perpetual motion, for he is never still, darting hither and thither, snatching at any floating trifle that seems to promise food; his activity is incessant. Throw on the water a bit of bread, and, before it has floated fifty yards, if there be bleak about, it will be surrounded by a perfect shoal of them, all struggling and jostling to get a crumb of the desired morsel. The embouchure of a drain is a favourite hunting-ground for them; there they may be seen in shoals, darting through the filth and capturing the atoms that pass down. They will take worm, gentle, or fly freely, either on the bottom, in mid-water, or on the surface, and the best way to catch them, perhaps, is by whipping with a single gentle. They are by no means bad eating, cooked like sprats, and formerly the nacre was collected from their scales, and fetched a good price for silvering various objects, particularly artificial pearls. It has been often a matter of question what becomes of the bleak in the winter, as they are hardly ever met with then.

THE ROACH (*Cyprinus rutilus*).

The roach was years ago, when roach fishers were nothing like as numerous as they are now, called "the river sheep," because he was so unsuspicious and so easily caught; but now he by no means deserves so simple a character; where he is seldom fished for, he may be correspondingly incautious, but a big roach in a fairly

fished stream is a mighty wary fellow; and though they may abound, you may tempt them in vain, and even when they are hungry and are feeding, and the water is coloured by rain, the finest tackle is required to make a good take of them. The roach is a great vegetarian, and feeds largely on water plants; and while the weeds are in a flourishing state during the summer, it is difficult to get the larger roach to come out and feed freely on other matters; but when the winter frosts have rolled away the weeds, and made them sour and inedible, the big roach come out, and, if the water be in good condition, feed fairly, and then is the roach fisher's paradise; and in the metropolitan and midland districts, there are more large roach killed in February, March, and even part of April, than during any other month.

As a rule on the Thames, and in waters which adopt the Thames rules, roach fishing, with all other bottom fishing, is closed to the angler on the 15th of March; but throughout March they are, as I can testify, in the very prime and height of tip-top condition; a March roach of a pound, from a good gravelly bottom, is, barring the bones, as good a fish as need be cooked; they do not spawn till the middle or latter end of May, so that even fishing out March, they have still six weeks at least before they commence spawning; which is more than enough protection in all conscience, particularly as the best of them do not come out of the weeds, as a rule, much before January. There are thousands of big roaches in the Thames which probably never see an angler's line; while in the weeds, if a clear space can be found, a few may be taken with silk weed, that is the long, slimy, silky looking weed, which is found on the bottom. A lump of this being wrapped on the hook, as I am told (for I never

tried it), attracts the fish, and good takes have often been made with it. The best baits for roach are, during the summer, gentles, with a change to red worm or greaves (in Trentshire, "scratchings,") which may be used, but in the winter either paste or pearl barley carries the palm, or a little bit of the brown of a crusty loaf. These are the best baits, but there are a great variety of others: insects various, as ant flies, or eggs, caddis-bait, blood worms, boiled-wheat and barley, green-wheat, and many other matters. The best ground bait for roach is that used by the great majority of the Thames fishermen, and this in the summer consists of bran and carrion gentles mixed up with clay into balls; and when the summer is past and carrion gentles cannot be obtained, scalded bread, bran, and boiled rice, mixed up either with clay or by itself, forms by far the best ground bait. If no clay is used, a small stone (as big as a walnut) should be inclosed in the ball to make it sink.

Here is the very best recipe for ground bait I know—it is my own. Get a big pudding basin and fill it two-thirds full of old crusts, as stale as you please, fill up with boiling water, and stand a plate over it, to let it soak for a quarter of an hour. Take a breakfast cup of broken rice and boil that, get about two-thirds of a peck of bran, put into it about a quart of barley meal, and well mix. Then squeeze out most of the water from the soaked bread and stir that in, pour the liquor off the rice and stir that in also, and work it all up together, adding a little of the rice liquor now and then if it is too dry. Then, when of the right consistency, work it up into balls of the size of moderate apples with a stone in the middle. If it is too dry it won't adhere well. If too wet it breaks up in the water. It should be tough and consistent. This will

make about twenty or more balls—enough for one day's fishing. It is the best ground bait ever made. Take care the materials are sweet and fresh, and don't keep it more than forty-eight hours or it will turn sour and drive the fish away. Some people use brewers' grains, bullocks' blood, and a host of similar matter.

One thing should always be observed carefully, viz., having got your fish together, be very careful not to overbait or overfeed them, or the fish will soon get gorged and refuse the hook. This is a great fault with many of the Thames puntsmen: they will throw in ground bait enough in one day to last for four if the fish are feeding, and many a promising day is thus destroyed; a little now and then, just enough to attract attention and to keep the fish on the look out is all that is needed. The skilful angler knows that his object is to keep the fish on the watch and eager for the hook, not to fill their bellies and make them capricious and dainty.

There is a method of ground baiting which, in low clear water, is sometimes very effective, and not only for roach, but for bream and other fish, and that is termed "blowing the trumpet"—a long tube of zinc is used deep enough to reach the bottom of the water. This is sunk and fixed to the side of the boat or punt. The upper end has a bell or trumpet shaped mouth, in fact it is a long-spouted funnel. A large tub of mud or clay and water, with bran, &c., and sometimes blood and any debris that can be easily got and will attract roach, is then mixed all up together until it becomes a slush. A pint or two of this from time to time is thrown into the bell of the funnel and emits a stream of mud at the bottom of the water, which discolours the water and much attracts the

fish. The angler, of course, fishes as much as he can in the clouded stream that issues from the fissure, and I have heard of capital takes made in conjunction with this apparatus. On the Trent the red worm (called there the cockspur) is held to be the best bait; but the Trent fishers, though the best barbel fishers perhaps in the world, are not equal to the cockneys at the roach. The bank fisher for roach often employs what is called a "Lea" rod, that is a light cane rod some 20ft. or 22ft. long or even more. With this rod no reel is used, and only enough line to allow a couple of feet or so above the float. When the angler hooks a good fish the long rod enables him to follow its movements about over a good deal of ground; and, as the fish tires he gradually pulls off and drops joint after joint on the ground until only three or four joints are left, a process which brings the fish at last within reach of the landing net.

In punt fishing, of course, the usual 11ft. or 12ft. light cane rod is used. Some people use a rather longer rod in order to give an extra yard or so of swim, but a very slight increase in the length of the rod tells most heavily on the muscles of the arm and hand in the course of a long day's fishing. The Trent fishers use a light 12ft. rod, not quite so stiff as our punt rods, with upright rings, and with this, which is called a "dacing rod," and with a light Derby twist line they pull the line back from between two of the upper rings by the left hand, and holding it as far back from the rod as convenient, with a gentle swing and by releasing the line so held simultaneously, they can cast their bait and float out into the stream at any reasonable distance from the shore; the light line lies on the surface of the water, and although there may be 15ft. of line out it does not swell or hang,

and the stroke on the float is instantaneous and free. Thus they obviate the necessity of using those long Lea rods, which are cumbrous in the extreme, and require two hands to hold them. But it is also certain that they cannot strike so accurately, and thus lose more fish and bites. But, whatever rod or style the angler adopts, this tackle must be of the lightest and neatest; you cannot have it too fine for roach fishing, and I quite agree with the Rev. James Martin—whose "Angler's Guide," published in 1854, contains the best directions as regards roach fishing ever published—that you cannot be too nice or particular on this head. Over and over again have I seen single hair beat the finest and most delicately stained gut; and though at one time I was rather sceptical on this point, I am now a complete believer that the finer the tackle you can conveniently use the better, and that nothing goes down so well with shy roach as single hair. You must keep yourself out of sight, too, as well as your tackle. You need not get behind a tree, but it is as well to have one at your back when you are fishing from a bank. I have often noticed the difference evinced by the movements of the fish when the angler was visible from the bank and when he could put himself in front of a tree, and the difference would scarcely be credited.

I have running through my field one of the finest roach rivers within fifty miles of London, and where the roach are unusually fine and good. I have fished at all times of the year, and under all kinds of circumstances for years, and have full experience of what I state. In coloured water, of course, less caution is necessary, though even then fine tackle will tell on the catch, but in clear water, unless you can keep out of sight, you will not catch a fish, and at the best you will

not catch many. The size of the hook must be regulated by the bait you use. A somewhat larger hook may be used for paste than is used for gentles or worm. Some anglers like hooks with very short shanks, but I do not think it a good plan, as they do not strike truly, they are more apt to spring, and many fish are lost by them. When the roach are biting shyly, a small hook with one gentle will often do better than a larger one with two.

Roach vary a good deal in their method of feeding. Sometimes the float dabs down with a sharp pluck. I do not like to see that, for either the fish are small, and when the small fish are "on" the big ones are not, or they are rather more sporting than feeding. Sometimes they niggle at the bait, and the float goes " tip, tip, tip," just dipping to the surface with short sharp jerks. That is not a good sign either, as you have to wait till the float goes under, and very often it does not. But when you see the float sink down steadily and gravely in a way that there is no mistaking, then be sure that the big ones are at work and the fish are well on ; and if there are plenty of them, and you do not overfeed them, and no change comes over the weather, happy fellow, you are in for a good day. Then waste no time, ground bait sparingly, and conduct yourself quietly. As soon as you have hooked a good fish get him down out of the swim as soon as you can, and with as little noise or splashing as possible.

The best floats for light work are straight porcupine quills. Some people like those jointed quill floats; I do not, they are apt to get out of order and take in water just when you don't want them to. A very thin cork case may be set upon the porcupine if a heavier float is wanted. The bait should be as near as possible to the bottom without hanging. The running

line should be as fine as need be. I have seen some of these fine silk-dressed lines, which are perfect if the dressing does not, as it too often does, weaken the line too much. Keep as little of the running line in the water as possible when fishing, so that the strike may come as directly as possible on the float; play your fish lightly but firmly, and always use the landing net to a pretty good fish. In coloured water tight corking is often a capital method for the roach. Beyond all be quiet and unobtrusive, and likewise patient.

THE RUDD (*Cyprinus eryophthalmus*).

This fish is often confounded with the roach, but it differs in several particulars. The dorsal fin is further back in the rudd, while the upper lip is more prominent in the roach, the roach being over and the rudd underhung. It is, as a rule, too, thicker and deeper, and is of rather a more olive colour, and it grows to a much larger size, roach rarely reaching 2½lb., while rudd sometimes run up towards 4lb. Rudd are sometimes caught in the Thames. In Osterly Park and Hatfield they are abundant. In Slapton Ley they reach a large size, and in Norfolk they are plentiful. They take much the same baits as the roach, and may be fished for in the same way. They take a fly well in Slapton Ley. They are very good table fish it is said, though I have never eaten them.

THE DACE (*Cyprinus leuciscus*).

This pretty fish may be often found in the same streams and caught in the same swims with roach; nevertheless, as a rule, they prefer somewhat sharper and shallower streams, feeding, as they do, more upon the surface. The dace is frequently found in trout streams; indeed, there

are few trout streams where they are not more or less found. In such places they are decidedly a nuisance, and it is desirable that they should be kept down by the net as much as possible, or in time they will interfere with the trout. On the Thames and its tributaries in suitable places dace take the fly well at times, and in a good day the angler may capture several dozen of them. They require quick striking, however; indeed, many of the most successful fly fishers for dace keep on casting quickly, and strike every time whether they see a rise or no, allowing the fly to dwell but a short time on the water; for they take and reject the fly very quickly, and have a nasty habit of following the fly without taking it. It is a common practice to tip the fly with a natural gentle or a bit of thin under-rind of bacon, or even a scrap of washleather to make the fish take a better hold. Although the fly should be small, it is as well to have a pretty good-sized hook, as they contrive to get off very often. Any small bright, red, black, blue, or yellow fly does, and a couple of turns of tinsel improves it.

For float fishing much the same plan must be pursued as is used for roach, though in the summer a shallower and sharper stream will often be found desirable. The dace, too, has less liking for paste and farinaceous baits than the roach, preferring first the red worm, and next the gentle. They bite rather quicker than the roach, and require quicker striking. They rarely run above ½lb. in the Thames, though in some of its tributaries—as the Colne and elsewhere—they reach ¾lb., and sometimes close on 1lb., and in the Kennet over 1lb. The best take I ever had on the Thames was thirteen fish that weighed 7lb., and this was after my companion had had his pick of the take. They were taken with lob worm when barbelling

at Richmond. There are large dace in some of the southern rivers; and I shall never forget my dismay, many years since at Downton, on the Avon, when a keeper promised to get me a pailful of dace for jack bait for spinning, when he brought me a lot with scarcely a fish under half a pound; one would have needed to substitute a punt pole for a rod to be able to cast and work them properly. They are very good for the table if fried nicely and crisply, with a squeeze of lemon and cayenne over them, or marinaded. To do this they should be cleaned, then trimmed, and placed in layers in an open baking dish; boil some vinegar, with salt, mace, and pepper in it, and a few bay leaves, and pour it over the fish; then bake for a short time, and in two days you will be able to eat them, bones and all, without difficulty, and they are piquant.

THE CHUB (*Cyprinus cephalus*).

The logger-headed chub, called by the French *un villain*, because he is not good for the table, though when up the river and short of provisions one may do a deal worse than eat a fresh-killed chub. The chub, I think, first opened to me the magic realms of piscatory literature at a very early age. Who does not recollect that chub with the white spot on his tail in Walton, and with which he purchased the milkmaid's song? Little thought the modest kindly old man how future ages would reverence that little brown book of his, and that what he then sold for 1*s.* 6*d.* might in course of time come to be sold for from 10*l.* to 20*l.* sterling. But to return to chub: the chub is a handsome-shaped, gallant-looking fish; and a basket such as I saw lately, of eight weighing from 2lb. to 4lb. each, all caught with the fly, forms a very satisfactory after-

noon's chubbing, because it argues many smaller ones turned back again to grow. I never take, or at least keep, a chub under 1lb., and more often, if the fish are running well, not under 1½lb. They are very little use, though on the upper parts of the Thames the people gladly buy them at fourpence a pound, coast fish not often reaching them.

Chub may be taken in various ways—they will take either float or ledger freely, they take the fly greedily, and at times both live and spinning bait, though these latter are not always certain. When roach fishing in a punt you will often get hold of a few chub quite at the end of the swim; and if you let out a few more yards, and make a somewhat longer swim, you will often pick up a chub or two when barbel fishing, both with float and with ledger; the chub are nearly sure to be handy to the swim in larger or smaller numbers. Though a shy fish, there are few bolder biting fish than the chub, when it does bite, and whether it be at bait, fly, or fish, he lets you know that he is at the hook unmistakably. At the fly he makes a rush and a dash which you cannot fail to see and hear too; and when he does get the lure within his big leathern chops he holds on, and is easily hooked, and, unless he gets to weeds, does not easily get away. The first rush or two of big chub is very fierce and determined, but he does not make so long a resistance as the barbel.

If the angler desires to fish specially for chub with a float, the best way is to plumb the hook to about two-thirds of the general depth of the stream, and to fish with a travelling float tripping just outside the boughs where chub are supposed to be, and casting in an old fragment or two of bait every now and then to attract the chub, and draw them from their holes.

Large takes of chub are made thus:—In Nottingham, bullock's brains and pith are fished with; the pith is simply the spinal marrow, this is used for the hook. Cut the outer rind off with a sharp pointed pair of scissors, and wash the contents carefully; some recommend it to be scalded. Some not. The angler can try both and please himself. A pipe of it about an inch long does for one bait. It is very tender, and needs some pains to fix it on the hook. The brains should be scalded, a few fragments being thrown in from time to time, and allowed to drift past the bushes along which the angler may be fishing. It is a very taking bait, and chub are very fond of it in mid-winter, when it is chiefly used. There are many other baits, as cheese cut into square bits of gooseberry size, rotten cheese and suet beaten to a stiff paste. Greaves, and even worms or wasp grubs, answer nearly as well, and the tail of the fresh-water crawfish boiled is a choicely good bait for "big uns."

The chub is very carnivorous, and will eat a variety of things, and beetles, grasshoppers, cockchafers, humble bees, &c., do well for dibbing or daping; or a very small live frog, only a bit of the skin of the back being taken on the hook so as to preserve his life without injury, is a capital lure. Chub holes or bushes are generally pretty well known, and the angler, in getting to one to dape, must keep out of sight, and make as little motion with his rod point as possible, moving it slowly and circumspectly; for, though the fish bites boldly when not frightened, he is easily alarmed, and you rarely catch more than two, or at the outside three, chub out of the same hole, without giving the others twenty minutes' rest to recover. The hook used, both for float fishing and daping, should be suited to the bait and

the size of the fish, but a No. 6 will usually be small enough. In fly-fishing for chub you may use artificial beetles, humble bees, wasps, chafers, &c., &c., &c. The flies used are chiefly palmers,* red, black, and green of large size, with peacock herl, black or yellow bodies, and with a silver twist on the bodies; and, if a bit of wash-leather is used as a tail it is more attractive, while if you can keep three or four gentles on the bend of the hook it adds greatly to the value of the fly. I have found a silver tinsel body, with brown turkey wing, and a furnace hackle kill well. A sandy red palmer with a yellow orange body kills well, too; all the flies should be of grilse size, or even small salmon size.

A strong rod is wanted to fly-fish for chub, as the sport is chiefly pursued under boughs, among stumps and roots, and in holes among rushes where weeds abound, and if you get hold of a 4lb. chub, as you sometimes do, it wants a strong rod and strong tackle to prevent him from getting into the weeds or roots. I always use a grilse rod and grilse tackle; that is, a double-handed rod of about fifteen or fifteen-and-a-half feet, and No. 2 salmon gut; and I hardly ever remember losing a fish by hanging up in weeds; whereas, I have heard of persons losing them by the dozen with single-handed tackle, and they are always the largest fish. Another thing, too, is, if you get hung in a flag or rush, you can break it without going in with the boat and spoiling the cast. In casting under the boughs it wants a capital sculler, one who is an adept at whipping the boughs himself, and who knows just where the fisher wants the boat put without telling. It does not require

* For how to dress a palmer, see "red palmer" or "hackle" in "Trout Flies."

any light casting for chub; the bigger and louder flop the fly makes on the water, the more certain it is to attract the notice of the chub; but it is desirable to cast as close in under the boughs as possible, and to do this habitually without getting hung up requires skill and judgment. If you *do* get hung up, always try mild measures first, as persuasion really *is* better than *force*, and often saves a breakage, or much trouble. Of all the artificial flies, &c., I find nothing do so well as the artificial cockchafer. It will cast to any reasonable distance, and is hugely fancied by chub, as there are very few that will not move at it; and, to insure their taking it, put about three or four tough gentles on the end of the hook (they will stand some whipping before they wear off), and this renders it almost irresistible. The silver-bodied fly, with turkey wing, comes next in my estimation, then the humble-bee, the orange palmer, the black palmer, and so on, but none of them are the worse for a gentle or two on the hook, The ledger is not a chosen method of fishing for chub, but it frequently kills the best when fishing for barbel. Nor is either live-bait or spinning a recognised method, though both of these styles take them at times. Chub are frequently taken in the Thames between 4lb. and 5lb. in weight, occasionally between 5lb. and 6lb., and now and then between 6lb. and 7lb.; above that they are very rare, though they have been known in other waters to run up to 9lb.

THE BARBEL (*Cyprinus barbatus*).

Next to the roach, perhaps, the barbel is the most popular fish with London bottom fishers; while on the Trent it takes the first place. It is a handsomely shaped fish, and well formed for the water it inhabits. Its

rounded, compact body, pointed head, and large fins being peculiarly adapted to these rapid and heavy waters; the roughest water in a river being frequently the most favourite haunt of the big barbel, while the swifter and heavier streams are nearly always their chosen resort.

Barbel are taken with the ledger or with float tackle, either while roach fishing or with the traveller in the Nottingham fashion—for which purpose the slider float is chiefly used, as it accommodates itself to any slight variation in the depth of the swim better than any other. They are also taken by expert fishers with a light pistol bullet and no float, the bullet being fixed a yard above the hook, and the tackle and bait allowed to trundle naturally along the bottom; when a bite is felt at the rod point, or seen by the stoppage of the tackle—any slack line being gathered up—a smart backward strike, well over the shoulder, usually succeeds in fixing the hook.

The ledger for barbelling should always be as light as it is possible to hold the bottom with, a moderate-sized pistol bullet often being quite heavy enough, though in some heavy streams a much heavier lead is needed. There should be at least three or four feet of tolerably fine but sound gut below the bullet, so as to give the bait plenty of play, and as fine a running line should be used as is possible, as it holds less water, and enables a lighter lead to be used. The rod should not be too heavy, as the lighter it is in reason the easier it is to feel the bite. A rod somewhat bigger than an ordinary punting roach rod, but rather stiffer, and made of solid wood, is best. The hook should be of the long-shanked, round-bend sort, and not larger than No. 4 or 5, and tied on tolerably fine gut. Do not strike at the first touch, but when the tug is repeated once or twice, strike smartly upwards. The best

baits for ledgering are, firstly, worms; secondly, greaves; and thirdly, a bunch of gentles, though some people occasionally catch barbel with raw beef or ham; and I believe that shrimps would make a capital bait if the fish were well ground-baited with them once or twice, so as to get used to them, and they are often easier and cheaper to get than worms. The fishing with traveller float has already been described. The hook used should be a No. 6 for this purpose, and the tackle comparatively fine, and shotted with a few tolerably heavy shot. The rod should be about twelve feet long, moderately stiff, but not too stiff; the rings upright, and the line fine Derby twist, while the float must be chosen with respect to the weight and rapidity of the swim, and should never be heavier than is necessary.

A barbel swim for traveller fishing is often from thirty to fifty yards long, and the float must be allowed to travel over that distance with as little check as possible. Whenever the float dips suddenly, strike firmly, and back over the shoulder; and if you hook your fish, keep on winding him up to the boat whenever you can, and, by the time he comes up within reach, he is usually (unless he is a big one, or unusually vigorous) pretty well done. When the fish are well on at this style it is very pretty fishing indeed. In fishing from the bank, the angler must refer back to what I have said on the Nottingham method. The only difference between it and traveller fishing from the punt is that you often have to cast the float some little distance out into the stream, and that it is much more difficult to guide it well down the right swim for any distance, particularly if it happens to be a windy, rainy day. Indeed, rain is the worst enemy you can have in traveller fishing, as it makes the line hang in the rings, and checks the float constantly,

and this is much worse in bank fishing than in punting, as it drags the float out of the swim. The roach tackle and method have already been described, and barbel often give capital sport with them, particularly when the big ones take a single hair hook, as they are prone to do. Then the angler must prepare for a long fight, extending to one, two, or even three or more, hours, as I have experienced, and it generally ends in the fish getting away after all, as I have also experienced. I once hooked a barbel on single hair, and played him for three and a half hours, and, when I got him in, he only weighed 6lb.; *but* he was hooked in the back fin, and though I was much disappointed in the size, it was almost equal to killing a fish of double the weight hooked fairly; and I count it the greatest angling feat I ever did, as the stream was strong, and at least half the struggle was carried on in the darkness of a November evening, as the care required, and the delicate handling of so large a fish, hooked foul (and very badly so too), in a sharp stream, with a single horsehair, was by no means an easy matter to administer. My arm was stiff for a day or two from the strain. This happened at Hampton Court, just below the weir, in 1846. I could not do it now, I am sure, though I have landed bream of the same weight in my own stream with single hair; but the fish are very different in their powers, the stream is easy, and you stand well over your fish.

The clay ball already mentioned is also a capital method of taking the barbel. When they are shy, and the water is low and clear, a small triangle and a bunch of gentles should be used. Barbel sometimes take the spinning bait early in the spring at the weirs, when the angler is spinning for trout, but it is not a recognised method of fishing for them. Barbel run up to 16lb. in weight, but

are not often taken over 11lb. or 12lb. The largest I ever got was 12lb., and that was with lampern bait, which they are fond of in the Thames late in the season, when the lamperns are running. Ground-bait with the head and entrails of the lamperns, and fish with a bit of the fish about gooseberry size. The ledger is best for this work. Barbel are very capricious, at any rate in the Thames; some years they bite very badly, and only a very few decent takes are made. Often they will not bite for weeks, and then they come on well for a week, and numbers are taken everywhere. This more often than not happens after a moderate flood, when the water is clearing. In the thicker water use the ledger; and as it clears try the traveller. A hundredweight and more is often taken in a good swim in a day, and I have known 3cwt. or 4cwt. taken out of a good swim in two or three days' fishing.

When you want to bait a barbel swim, first be sure that the barbel are there. Then take care that no one sees you, if possible; and the best way to be sure of this is not to bait in the evening, but just at daybreak; chop up four or five hundred lob worms, if you use worms, and either inclose them in large balls of clay, or throw them in loose well up stream of the swim you want to fish, so that they may ground where you expect and wish. Repeat this again next night, and a third if you think it desirable; but when you are going to fish bait sparingly with a hundred or two only of worms, just to keep them about, but not to cram them, and bait on this occasion the night before. Then when you come to fish next morning—if no one else is fishing your swim—pitch as gently as possible, throw in a few fragments of worm, and commence. If you use greaves or any other bait the same method must be pursued.

The barbel, though he is not given to make desperate and quick rushes, like the salmon or trout, often makes a longer and more stubborn resistance, and if he gets near the boat will often double round the punt pole. An angler with a good fish round a punt pole is an instructive sight, and it not unfrequently causes him to utter naughty words. They are poor eating, though the fishermen use them by splitting them up, taking out the backbone, and frying them. I have tried them, but they are watery, bony beasts, and, unless you belong to a club or want to show them, they are hardly worth bringing home. I generally return all under 4lb. unless I have someone to give them to who wants them; and I wish everybody did the same, it would be better for sport. Barbel are a widely distributed fish, and are found throughout the south of Europe, in France, Spain, Germany, and Prussia, many being in the rivers of the Crimea.

THE BREAM (*Cyprinus brama*).

The French say that "he who has bream in his pond may bid his friend welcome." I was sceptical on this for a long time, having once tasted some that were by no means desirable; but since then I have tried them from a gravelly reach of the Thames, and found them very palatable, and no doubt with French cookery they might be made very good indeed. The bream usually prefers a deep hole or eddy to a stream, though occasionally they are taken in both, and it is not unusual to take bream and barbel in the same swim, and I have more than once seen a bream and a barbel on two rods side by side at the same time. They are fond of a deep hole under a shady tree. In the Norfolk rivers and broads, which are the great

head-quarters of bream, they abound in great profusion, and the takes there are counted by the stone instead of the pound. Though the bream in Norfolk rarely exceed 4lb. in weight—while in the Thames they sometimes run up to 6lb., and in my little stream, the Crane, a tributary of the Thames, I have often taken them of 6lb. and larger—in the Irish lakes, where they sometimes abound greatly, bream have been taken up to 9lb. The bream is a very slimy fish, and often when hooked will bore head downwards, and rub the line with his side, so that it comes up sometimes quite coated with slime for a foot above the hook.

The same methods of fishing for bream as I have given for barbel should be adopted, viz., by the ledger, the roach float fishing, and the traveller float. The hook used should be a size or so smaller than that used for barbel. On the Thames they ground bait with worms and gentles, and if you can get a large supply of brandlings they are far the best even for ground bait, and for the hook nothing beats brandlings. In Norfolk boiled barley or grains is the favourite ground bait, but I do not think they would be found insensible to the worm. Grains and barley, however, have the merit of being cheaper and much easier to get. On the Thames, at any rate, the finer the tackle the better it pays, as the bream there are often shy in biting. They are also capricious, like the barbel, and may be caught later than the barbel, an open week in mid-winter often giving good sport with them, which it rarely does with the barbel. I have caught them up to the second week in April, when they began to get rough for the spawning, as, indeed, do the roach nearly about the same time, and both of these fish might well be taken till the end of March—March being one of the best months in the

year for both; while the whole of June, when they, as well as the barbel, have hardly ever quite done spawning, and are never in condition, should be made a fence month in the Thames for these fish. In quiet eddies or ponds, the bream will sometimes raise the float when they bite, instead of pulling it down. I think this is owing very much to the shape of the fish when it picks the bait off the ground and resumes its natural position.

Bream make a smart run at the first start, and fight boldly for a time; but the shape of the fish is not cut out for a very prolonged resistance, and as soon as he gets the worst of it he turns on his side, making but a clumsy wobble of it, and gives in. Much depends, however, on the strength of the tackle; strong tackle soon beats him, but he will play very gamely for some time on light. I fancy that bream are rather a wandering fish, and that they are apt to move about a good deal from spot to spot. I have known them do so in my river, and also on the Thames.

THE CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*).

There are all sorts of suggestions as to how the carp came to England; but, like the birth of Topsy, there is an obscurity about it, and I "'specs they grow'd," and didn't come at all; at any rate it does not much matter—what does, nowadays, when, as the modern sage says, "There's nothing new and nothing true, and it don't matter?" However, there the carp is—very often occupying water that is fitter and would be more worthily and remuneratively occupied by his betters. Though how good a carp could be made, we moderns, I fancy, do not know, because we do not attempt to treat them as our forefathers did; and if we catch one out of a muddy pond, we proceed,

without further delay or preparation, to eat him, when we are horrified at the fearful flavour of mud he gives forth. Now, I cannot help doubting that a fish which can be so pervaded with an outside flavour, like this, by association, must be a very delicately organised fish, and should be capable of a very different result. One thing is admitted, viz., that 150 years or so ago carp fetched a higher price than salmon.

Carp, when they grow to a large size, or are much fished for, soon become very wary, particularly in ponds. I am inclined to think that they bite much better in rivers; and in rivers with a gravelly bottom, like the Thames, they are far better, even for the table. As they do not spawn till about June, they are in season through March and April, and therefore I have advocated the increase of them in the Thames, as they would afford good sport when the ordinary Thames fish are out of condition. To fish for carp, the angler requires to be very quiet and unobtrusive, particularly when they are in ponds. Carp grub for their bait along the bottom, and if the angler keeps quiet and out of sight, he may often see them within reach of his rod, routing along in quiet and shallow water, with their tails or back fins above water. I have often taken them when thus occupied by softly casting my float and tackle out a yard or two ahead of them, in the direction they are travelling, and allowing the bait to lie on the bottom, when I have frequently managed to capture the rover. Carp will take both worms and gentles well at times, but farinaceous baits are more in favour with the carp fishermen of the present day; for if there happens to be a lot of small roach, perch, or eels in the same pond—as there too often is—these will, if worms or gentles be used for ground bait, hasten to the spot and eat up most of it

before the carp can find it out; and, added to this, when you begin to fish, the first miserable little eel or perch you take will drive many of the best carp away; and after you have taken two or three, there will hardly be a carp left.

Carp will take a variety of baits, as worms, gentles, wasp grubs, plain and sweet paste, boiled green peas, and potatoes. The last is the best bait that can be used, particularly with big carp; it should be about three parts, or rather more, boiled—rather a waxy sort being chosen—and the best way of baiting with it is to use a small triangle on a single thread of gut, with a small loop to the other end of it, having a good big loop in the line to loop it on to. Then take a baiting needle, and, hitching it on to the loop of the triangle, draw the gut through the middle of the potato and pull the triangle up so as just to bury the hook points in the potato. Then cut the potato round with a knife neatly till it is about the size of a good sized gooseberry, and loop it on to the line—the big loop allowing the bait and all to be passed through easily. The best way of fishing this bait is with a very light ledger, a small pistol bullet being quite heavy enough. The gut should be fineish, but strong and sound, as a big carp is a doughty antagonist, and his first rush is not to be sneezed at. I have been broken in it many a time, when I have been at all in difficulties; and carp, as they often run up to 10lb. or 12lb. weight, and even larger, and have very powerful fins, want careful managing at first. They are, too, pretty cunning, and will run you into a mass of weeds if they can.

In fishing a pond in this fashion it is best to attach a very light float to the line, above the pistol bullet, allowing enough line to permit the bullet to rest easily on the bottom, and the float to lie on the surface. It is as well,

if you have any plumbing of the depth to do, to do it the night before fishing, so as not to disturb the bottom. Two or three pieces of rush make an efficient float for this purpose, a half hitch or two being taken at either end of them; and, as this is a very common object on ponds, it does not challenge the observation that a brilliant red, green, and white float does. Casting the bullet and bait out to the required spot, draw the float and bullet gently along a little, so as to tighten the line and to extend the bait straight out along the bottom from the bullet. You may then lay the rod down on a forked stick, as you will easily see by the float any nibble, and have plenty of time to recover the rod before the bite takes place.

Never strike while a carp only nibbles. Wait till he drags the float steadily under, and appears to be going away with it; when, seeing all clear and in order about the line and reel for a rush, you may hit him smartly, and if he is a big one "look out for squalls"—as his mouth is very tough and leathery, you may play him firmly. Get him away as soon as possible from your pitch, so as not to frighten the rest, and land him as far from the pitch as you can. Then come back to the pitch, quietly throw in a handful or two of ground bait, and follow up with the hook as before, and probably in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, if the fish are well on, you may see your rush float "niggle-niggling" again. The best ground bait, of course, for this work is boiled potato. If fishing a pond, always bait two, or even three spots, if you can; so that, when the fish are rather alarmed at one, you can rest it and go to another—casting in a few handfuls of bait before you leave, to draw them back again. Always fish from the shore, too, if you can, as carp are shy of a boat, and any motion of the water easily alarms them.

In fishing with the ledger in a stream you would discard the float, and fish as for barbel, by the feel. In this case, when you feel a nibble, you must yield some inches of line and wait for the tug that announces a bite. This is held to be, by experienced carp fishers, the best and most killing method of carp fishing, particularly for big fish. The great thing is to let the bait and line rest on the bottom for a foot or two. In this way the carp sees neither the line nor the hook, as he cannot fail to do if he is curious in float fishing when the depth is exactly plumbed and the bait only just touches the bottom. I have heard a haricot bean, or even a small broad bean well boiled, spoken of as a capital bait, but I never tried it. It seems, however, a very likely bait. I have no doubt, too, that a lump of pearl barley, such as we use for roach, would be a good bait, using half-a-dozen corns; and it would be a nice bait to ground bait with.

In float fishing use as light a float as you can, and have the shots or sinker as far from the hook as you conveniently can; and here, too, if you can do it, I always find that if 4in. or 5in. of the hook gut rests on the bottom it pays best. A worm or other bait only just touching the bottom, with a row of shot 6in. or 8in. above it, is very likely to challenge the attention of the carp, who at once sees something he is not accustomed to, and becomes suspicious. To show how different it is when the line rests on the bottom, I once took a 7lb. carp on an eel line with a coarse string snood and worm bait. Carp always nibble a good deal at the bait before they take it, and will often nibble off the tail of the worm, or suck off your paste and leave the hook showing without taking the hook at all. In using paste I prefer sweet paste, made up with honey or brown sugar, to plain, and I have heard of paste made of

pound cake being greatly affected by the carp. Poor old Bill Kemp, now with the majority, a capital old carp fisher at Teddington, used to put on a lump of this as big as a large gooseberry, and fish it with ledger tackle; and he used to take a great many fine carp. He was a wily old fellow, and many a good day's sport I had with him in days gone by, but poor old Bill went the way of all flesh, though he left many good fishermen of his own name behind him, who still keep up their calling at Teddington.

The rod used for this work should be about 12ft. or 13ft. long for pond fishing, light and stiff, with upright rings somewhat like a Nottingham traveller rod, only a bit stiffer. In punting use the same as for bream and light barbelling; the line, a fine dressed one, sound and strong, to run easy and stand a good strain, and yet not be too heavy in the water. The gut should have as much play through the bullet as the longest strand of gut you can get will give it, so that there should be no check against the bullet when the carp is nibbling. I always like, if possible, to bait a pitch or a swim for two or three nights in succession before I go to fish it, so as to draw the fish well on, as in ponds particularly it might take some time before the fish found the bait. If there is any shelter on the bank, as a bush or tree, it is as well to take advantage of it, as the carp is very quick-sighted. If there be nothing of the kind, it will pay well to stick a hurdle up on end, supporting it with a couple of sticks fixed in the ground. You do not need to get behind it; it is sufficient if you have it behind you. The carp will soon get used to it; but be careful not to stump about or shake the bank at all, or you will see some long waves going out into the depths of the pond. In fact, you cannot be too quiet and

unobtrusive with so wary a fish, for though you may at times catch a few fish, particularly small ones, when disregarding these precautions, in the long run you will find it well to observe them.

The monks, who particularly cultivated the carp at many of their monasteries, had regular succession ponds for breeding and feeding them; clear pure water, and plenty of it, running over a sweet gravel bottom being the last stage they went through before being tabled—bread and milk and other farinaceous diet being used to fatten and sweeten them. Carp can be rendered very tame, and will take their food from the hands of their attendant in time, being called by a bell, or whistle, or other signal. They have a species of carp in Germany called the Spiegel, or Mirror carp, which has a singular row of large brilliant scales running along the side; also the Leather carp, a fish with small scales and very like a tench. They are both said to be better table fish than the ordinary carp. In this country the Prussian and the Crucian carp are often found, though they are much inferior both for table and angling purposes to their superior congeners. The gold and silver fish are also carps. The carp has been taken over 20lb. in weight in this country, but half that weight is a large one, and not so very common. Carp live to a very great age.

THE TENCH (*Cyprinus tinca*).

The tench is often found in the same ponds and places as the carp, and they thrive well together. They spawn about a fortnight or three weeks later than the carp, as a rule, and do not reach the same size. A tench of 4lb. is a large one, though I have seen plenty of 5lb. or 6lb., and they have been known to reach 8lb. or 9lb.; but this is a

very unusual size; a 2lb. or 3lb. fish is a very good fish. They are even more capricious in their biting than the carp. August and September being, perhaps, the best months for them. They prefer worms to any other bait, though sometimes a bunch of gentles will be found to tempt them; a red worm, however, is their favourite bait, and, with a No. 7 hook and a couple of red worms neatly strung on, the angler should take tench if they are inclined to feed at all. I remember formerly to have read that it was a good plan to dip the red worm in tar, but I cannot believe it, as tar is usually death to fish of all kinds, and utterly abhorrent to them; but the old writers were fond of strange theories, many of which I have proved to be utterly false. I once spoilt a capital day's trouting by keeping my worms in fennel by the advice of some old writer—perhaps he had our friend Greville in his mind, and not the herb of that name—which did not agree with the fish at all; for they no sooner took it in their mouths than they spat it out again in apparent disgust, and I lost scores of good bites, till I had at last to hunt for others in a pelting rain, when I did better—bad as the substitute was.

The tackle for tench should be a light float, fineish gut, and No. 7 hook. The rod and line should be similar to those noted for carp fishing. Plumb the depth so that the worm may just touch or rest on the bottom, and ground bait with chopped worms and gentles, as the tench does not affect farinaceous food. When the tench bites, like the carp he nibbles a good deal before he takes, and will often, after niggling the float up and down for a minute or two, turn away from it, and even leave it altogether. When he does this, I have often quickened his appetite by drawing the worm slowly away from him,

when, thinking he is going to lose it, he will often rush at it and bolt it at once; this would probably frighten the carp, but it frequently has the opposite effect on the tench; when the float slowly sinks and streaks away towards the middle of the pond, you may strike and do your best. Tench are very fond of weeds, and will often abound in small ponds which are quite full of them and impossible to fish. In such cases I have often had good sport by setting a man to work to rake away a clear space of some twenty or thirty or more feet square; bait this well once or twice, and you may chance to get a good day's sport in it; and do not be in a hurry to leave off, for as long as you can see your float the tench will keep on biting, particularly on a warm, still evening—and often better then than in the broad daylight.

Tench are very slimy fish, and when cooked this slime should be wiped or scraped off; but they are a much better fish for the table in an ordinary way than carp, being succulent and nourishing food. The old story of the tench being gifted with medicinal properties is, of course, pure nonsense, his slime not being an equivalent for "parmacetti" for any wound "inward" or outward. Both carp and tench are remarkable for the long time they can live out of the water, if only kept a little damp; and in cool weather they may be transported almost any reasonable distance in damp moss. The stories of the endurance of tench under these circumstances are endless. I once carried one 160 miles in only a damp cloth, and he was quite lively at the end of his journey. The golden tench, or gold schley, a remarkable species of tench of a bright yellow gold colour, was brought to this country years ago by Mr. Higford Burr, of Aldermaston, and has bred and thriven well with him, and may be seen in

many of our aquariums, where it is a conspicuous object. Like the carp, tench abound in many of the ponds and reservoirs round London, capital takes being often made in the Welsh Harp waters by the frequenters of the place. The largest I have seen are in Sir John Gibbons's water, near Staines, where they are plentiful and very large—likewise shy.

THE PERCH (*Perca fluviatilis*).

The perch has been called a bold biting fish, and, as a rule, I think he is; though there are times when a big perch is anything but rash in his proceedings. When full fed, towards the middle or end of summer, and king of his favourite eddy, he will inspect with perfect caution and care any bait that may be offered him; and though, at the same time, if you happen upon a warm corner, you may haul out a dozen or two chubby fellows of three or four to the pound, your two-pound perch exercises a nice discrimination in the selection of his food; and though you may even see him chevying the minnows and small fry about in all directions, yet, if you intrude yours in his way, his taking it is anything but a certainty. Wait till the winter, when there have been floods and frosts, when food has been short, and he, in common with fifty others, is sharp set; then truly you may come to terms with him, and his biting will be as bold as you can desire.

There are various ways of fishing for perch, viz., by the paternoster, which is the best way; by float; by putting live bait on a ledger, in which way I have taken many while roaching or gudgeoning; and by spinning a minnow or spoon, which last way will be described hereafter more particularly; it is sufficient to say here that the bait is put on to a tackle, and in such a way that it revolves

rapidly when drawn through the water, and many perch are thus taken by trailing with a long line behind the boat when rowing slowly over a lake or against stream on a river. As regards the paternoster, it consists of a plummet or bullet at the end of about 5ft. or 6ft. of gut; just above the plummet a hook is fixed on about 5in. or 6in. of gut; about 10in. or a foot above this is fixed another, on 6in. or 7in. of gut, and at a like distance above, if necessary, a third. These hooks are about No. 4 or 5 in size and short in the shank. The gut should be moderate, but not too fine nor too coarse, but a shade or two finer than the main line of the paternoster.

The paternosters sold at the shops, with big shots, gutta-percha cylinders, and hogs' bristles, are simply rubbish. The best way to make one is to take 2yds. of gut, loop on your lead, then tie a loop on the gut about 3in. or 4in. above, into which loop your first hook, and repeat the process as directed with the other hooks, and the less lashing or whipping, shots or gutta-percha about the tackle the better, as, though the perch is a bold-biting fish, he is not quite a fool. Loop this on to the running line, and hook a minnow, or small gudgeon, or any other small fry, on to each hook, through the lip, and you are all ready for action. Some people like a worm on the bottom hook for a change; it is not a bad plan, as it affords a choice. If there are pike about, it is a good plan to substitute for the top hook a small triangle tied on gimp, and to use a rather larger bait on it, hooked through the back fin. In this way you will avoid losing your gut hooks and often take good pike. When you fish, drop the plummet into the water and let it find the bottom, and keep a tight line, so as to feel the slightest bite. If no bite comes in

half a minute or so, draw the plummet gently to the right or left about a yard; fish the water within reach all round you; having finished that, swing the plummet a yard or two further away from you, and fish that line of water in the same manner, and so keep on casting further and further until you have fished all the water you want to, when go on to another spot.

In punting you do just the same—choosing the likely spots, of which the eddies are the best just off the edge of the stream. When these are large, as on the Thames after floods and frost, many perch will frequently be found congregated; the head or first turn or two of the eddy and close to the stream will always be found the favourite spot, as it is there that the food is first driven in from the stream. When you have to make longer casts beyond the command of the rod, you work the line back a foot at a time until the plummet is under the rod point once more, when cast again—but not twice to the same spot, unless you have a bite or a fish there, then stick to that spot as long as the fish bite. It requires a good puntsman, who is well up to his work, to manage his punt properly and manipulate the baits. The best plan is, if two anglers are engaged, for them to stand side by side in the stern, each bringing his fish round on his own side to the puntsman, who lands them, takes them off, and rebaits. In this way, with a friend, I have often taken a bushel of fine perch in a day on the Upper Thames, in February. When you feel a bite do not strike at the first touch, but when it is repeated strike smartly, and take care you do not scratch and lose your fish, as, if you do, you will too often find that the story that a scratched perch frightens the rest is no fable, and though it does not always hold good, it very

often does; and if you lose two or three it is pretty nearly a certainty.

Where the water is not deep and is pretty clear, two hooks will be enough; but in coloured water of six or eight feet, I like three. Perch choose a quiet eddy, not a wild one, and the big ones always rest nearest to the edge of the stream, as the best feeding place, and a big perch prefers a fat little gudgeon to a small minnow—he has an eye for size when hungry. I like the bottom hook pretty close to the bottom, as the bait always strikes up towards the surface; and if the hook is fixed high up, it will not easily be seen by the perch which happen to be on the bottom, and which are always the majority. You may take hold of a few more weeds, but that cannot be helped. The loss of a perch hook or two is not of much consequence, and is nothing to the loss of a score or two of perch. When gudgeon fishing, a paternoster laid out beside the swim is often very effective. The gudgeon congregate to feed on the larva and worms, and the perch congregate to feed on the gudgeon, and, if you are on the look-out, you will feed on the perch.

The next best method is to fish with a float and two hooks, one near the bottom and one a foot higher, the lower baited with worm, the upper with minnow; and there are times, in the summer, when the fish are shy, that they will take float tackle better than paternoster. There is little to be told of this style: when the float bobs, which it does usually smartly, give the fish time and you cannot miss him; a somewhat smaller hook does for float tackle, as you give more time. In the summer the streams are the best place for perch; with the autumn they get into the eddies, and near old locks and hatches. In lakes, the shallow weedy-bottomed bays are the home of the perch.

Trailing is often the best plan here, but if you can find a clear bottom the float or paternoster may do.

Perch take the spoon well, but they take the artificial bait known as the otter better. This is a triangular bit of metal, silvered on one side, copper on the other, and revolving on a spindle. There are numbers of artificial baits and minnows, but none better than this—I think it even beats the minnow, as it both shows and spins better. I have taken hundreds of perch in the Irish lakes with them, and it beats the spoon two to one—at least, that is my experience. Some people paint it red on one side instead of copper, and attach a small bunch of gay feathers, but I do not know that it much improves it. I have no doubt, also, that Mr. Hearder's plano-convex spinner, which is contrived on a somewhat similar principle, would be an excellent perch lure, as it is for all kinds of other fish that take spinning baits, both in fresh and salt water.

Perch sometimes take a gentle, but worms and small fish are their favourite food, and they will often take an artificial fly, but, save, in one place, where it was often used, I never knew it to be a recognised way of fishing for them. Perch often abound so in ponds that they never grow above half a pound weight, and few, perhaps, reach that—overcrowding and want of food, no doubt, is the reason. Perch occasionally reach three and four pounds weight, and even bigger, but are not so very common of that size; a two-pound fish is a very handsome fish, and not to be despised. There are plenty of that size in the Thames. They have been known to reach eleven pounds in this country; but a five or six pound fish is decidedly rare. The rod for paternostering should be about ten or eleven feet long, with upright rings, pretty stiff and strong,

as it often has heavy weights to stand. A friend of mine on the Kennet once had three perch on his paternoster at the same time. He estimated them at close on seven pounds together; one got off, but he landed the other two. The line, too, should be moderately strong—eight-plait dressed silk.

CHAPTER V.

THE PIKE (*Esox lucius.*)

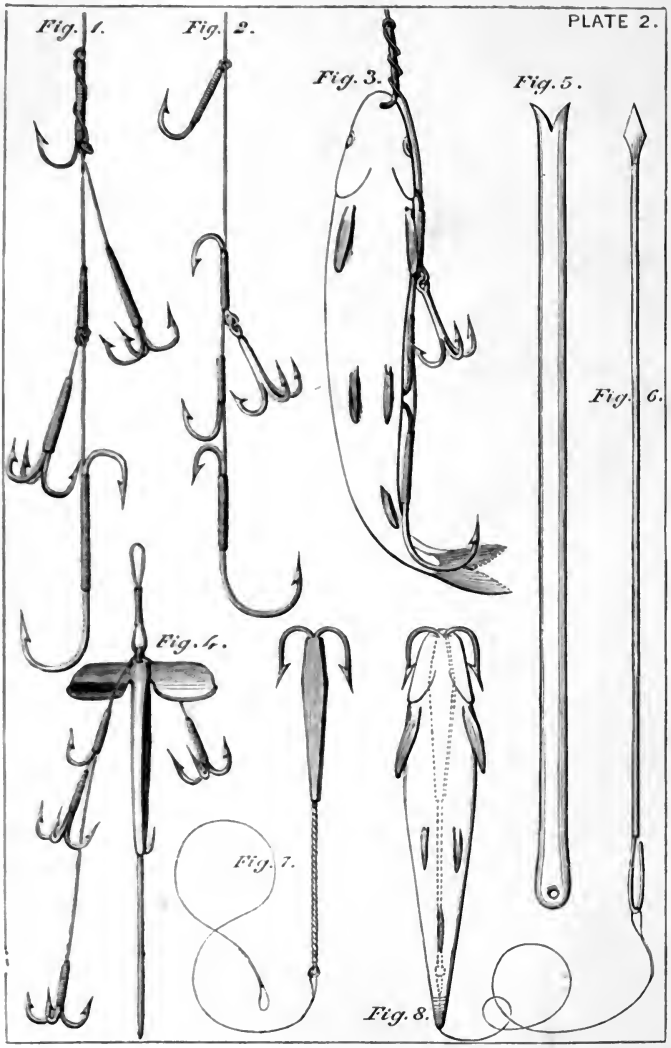
THE pike has a widish range, being found all over Europe, and having two or three representatives in America. In this country we have all sorts of stories extant of the enormous size at which they have been taken; but somewhere about seventy pounds seems to be the outside that we may take it has really been captured, and an angler may count himself fortunate if in the course of his life he ever get on equal terms with one half that size. Twenty-pounds pike are now sufficiently common—much more so than they were formerly; but every pound above twenty-five adds more and more to their rarity; while thirty or over are by no means common. The Lillieshall pike story has many of the elements of fable about it, and all the elements of gross exaggeration; while the Manheim pike reached much of his length by supplementary vertebræ which never belonged to him. Pike may be caught, 1st, by spinning; 2ndly, by live bait; 3rdly, by trolling—these being the three chief ways of taking him. The most sportsmanlike, as well as the most attractive and lively, is undoubtedly by spinning.

The art of spinning consists of placing a fish bait on a set of hooks in such a manner that when the bait is drawn through the water it revolves rapidly, and to this end the

body is either bent, or the tail crooked, so as to give a sort of Archimedian screw principle to the whole apparatus. The tackle used is of two parts—the trace or line to facilitate the spinning, and the flight of hooks on which the bait is to be hung. The trace consists of two lengths (each about two feet long) of gimp, twisted gut, or single gut, with a swivel at either end, and one between the two lengths. Just above the second swivel (from the bait) the lead or sinker should be attached. This is sometimes a chain of shot, &c., &c., but there is nothing so good as a pipe lead threaded on a bit of copper wire, as this can be put on or taken off the trace at any moment, and heavier or lighter lead substituted; and if the lead be made rather flat on one side, and pot-bellied on the other, as shown in the lead appended to the tackle in Fig. 6, Plate 1, it will prevent the tackle from twisting above the second swivel, and so prevent hanking or snarling of the line, which is sometimes very troublesome to the spinner.

The flight of hooks is a matter which has caused great consideration. They must allow the bait to spin well, and they must be placed so as to take the best hold of the fish; and they should be as little visible as possible to the squeamish pike; for pike often are mighty squeamish, and will follow a bait for yards without taking it if they see anything suspicious about it. Now, the old-fashioned three-triangle tackle with a sliding lip and a reversed tail hook is that which obtains the most general favour; at Plate 1, Figs. 5 and 7, this may be seen plain and baited. The tail triangle should be inserted in the middle of the tail, the tail drawn up into a crook, and the reversed hook inserted to keep it so. The next triangle should be inserted somewhere under the end of the dorsal fin, and the third at the shoulder; two or three turns of the tackle

PLATE 2.



are taken round the shank of the sliding lip hook, so as to bring it to the right place and prevent the hook from slipping, and it is then hooked through the lips of the bait (through the lower lip first), and the bait is armed. The great object is to let all the hooks lie evenly, easily, and in a line, for if the line in which they lie be crooked, or the space between each hook and triangle be not justly apportioned, the bait will not spin properly, and the hooks must be re-adjusted till it does. If the young fisherman can get half-an-hour's counsel from an old Thames puntsman, he will learn more from seeing it done than he will by reading about it to any extent.

At Plate 2, Figs. 1 and 2, will be seen plans of two other tackles. No. 1 is Mr. Pennel's, and No. 2 is mine. The method of baiting the last is shown at Fig. 3. I give the preference by far to my own plan, as it spins a bait admirably, particularly with small and moderate sized baits; and when once the bait does spin well it prevents it from ever getting out of spinning, and it preserves the bait for double or treble as long as any other tackle does, and when baits are scarce that is no slight consideration. I have fished a whole day for large Thames trout with two baits, and they never got out of gear till they got a tug from a fish. The tackle has this further advantage, that it shows less than any other, and the chief triangle stands out so well that it cannot easily miss the fish. For large trout or moderate sized pike baits, to my mind, it is better than any other. I once killed ten pike at Lord Craven's with it, which averaged 13lb. each, and I did not lose a fish. When I need to use larger baits, I prefer Mr. Wood's adaptation of the Chapman spinner, as more satisfactory in every way. I shall refer to this presently. However, everybody does not hold my opinion, so I have given plans

of the other tackles. There are many other arrangements of hooks, but these are much the best.*

The directions given for putting a bait on refer to fish such as the dace, gudgeon, or any small fish of such like rounded shape; with a bleak or roach the method slightly differs. The body of the fish must be set on the hooks, not straight, with a mere crook to the tail, but in something of a bow like the outline of the bowl of a spoon. (See Plate 2, Fig. 3.) The Nottingham spinners get a very good spin out of a roach by means of only two good-sized triangles and a lip hook. They hook the lowest into the back, behind the dorsal fin, give the body a slight bend, then hook the second into the shoulder of the bait, pass the thread of gimp through the gills, and out of the mouth, fix the lip hook, and the bait spins well.

Of all the artificial aids to spinning there is only one which I think worth notice, and that is the Chapman spinner; and until Mr. Wood devised his method of arming it, which overcomes the objections to it, I had but a small opinion of that. The Chapman spinner is a piece of brass wire with a lead cast on to it, and a pair of Archimedian fans at the head, and two sets of triangle hooks hanging from either side, but in the original Chapman these were fixed, as was the gimp with which it was attached, to the trace. The wire and lead were thrust down the throat and into the belly of the bait, the upper hooked in either side. The result was that after some little use the hooks worked loose, and the mouth of the bait—originally close up to the fan of the apparatus—

* Mr. Wood has also brought out a new arrangement of hooks, which he sets great store by as losing very few fish. It is rather complicated, so I do not attempt to give a cut of it here. It is an excellent tackle, however.

dropped away from it, and there was a gap between the head of the bait and the fan; and as the lead and wire got play, the whole thing worked more and more loose, and the spinning became affected, besides the fan being half an inch or more apart from the head. Mr. Wood's improvement was to make a loop of the gimp on which the two sets of hooks were fastened, which slid through the eye of the wire, as shown in Plate 2, Fig. 4; thus when the spinner was baited, the loop sliding always kept the mouth of the bait close to the fan. This is now a capital method, as it preserves the baits wonderfully well, so that you may often catch two or three fish with one bait. All you have to do is to graduate your fans to the size of your bait, increasing the size of them as you use a larger bait. I also flatten the lead and widen it as much as as I can to prevent any turning round in the belly of the bait.

Having now described the tackle and the method of baiting it, I proceed to the rod and line, and then to the *modus operandi*. The rod used by the London fishers, who are perhaps the best pike fishers in the world, is a rod about 12ft. or 13ft. long (though of late years they have taken to using a shorter one than that), pretty stout but springy, being capable of standing plenty of wear and tear, and a good pull, with upright rings to let the line pass easily and tops of two stiffnesses and lengths, one to take heavier baits and larger fish, and, therefore, shorter and stiffer than the other, which is for ordinary work. Many anglers like these rods to be made of strong bamboo, as being somewhat lighter in a long day's work; I, however, much prefer solid wood, either of hickory or greenheart, as the weight, not falling on any one set of muscles, and being a good deal thrown on the thigh or hip while spinning, is of no consequence: while, I think, solid wood

stands long and heavy work better than bamboo, and if you chance upon a heavy fish of from 12lb. to 20lb., or even more (as one may sometimes), you feel more at home and more safe with him. I think, too, that a solid rod, if properly made, has a better spring and casts a better bait than cane. The rod should have a large button on the end of the butt to rest against the hip comfortably; those of rubber are best, as they do not slip. The line should be of eight-plait dressed silk, not too coarse or thick, as it does not run so freely through the rings, and not too fine, or it will not stand the work, and is apt not only to wear out speedily but to tangle and kink when it gets wet. This kinking in pike spinning is sometimes a great nuisance. It comes from the swivels not working properly, and the spinning being continued up the running line; and the best way to prevent it is to have most of your swivels *below* the lead, and to use a Field lead, the balance of which, being all on one side, prevents all the line above it from turning round or spinning. Always after using your lines—and this applies to all lines—before putting them away, unreel them and wind them round the back of a chair to dry thoroughly, or they will very soon rot. In choosing a line pick out one that is not too hard in the dressing, or you may find the dressing crack at intervals in using, and your line become a sort of chain, in links as it were, with soft places every foot or two. Neither should it be damp or sticky, or in a very short time you will find the dressing wear off. Choose one that feels dry and firm in the grasp, but not wiry, and always give it a trial by a strongish tug before purchasing, as these dressed lines, owing to some bad material either in the substance or the dressing, are not unfrequently rendered utterly rotten by the dressing. Some people when they have worn off the

dressing have their lines re-dressed, but they are very seldom worth it. Choose a line about 50yds. or 60yds. long, so that when one end begins to wear you can turn it end for end and use the other. When both are worn, if the line has been a good one and has been fairly treated, it does not owe you much, and you had better, for your own comfort and satisfaction, buy another; a winch with a light check action is the best. Many people nowadays prefer to cast from the reel in the Nottingham style. To those who do I have nothing to say. It has some advantages, but I do not think you can cast as long a line with it, as of course there must be more friction.

We now come to the *modus operandi*. Having run your line through the rings, fastened on the trace and hooks and baited the latter, raise the rod with the butt resting against your thigh or hip, the bait hanging down to about half the length of the rod. Draw off the reel as much line as you think you can cast, and let it lie at your feet (usually on the left side) in loose coils, but so that there may be no catch or tangle. Then holding the line to the rod, with the right hand above the reel and grasping the rod with the left below the reel, wave the rod backwards to give the bait a swing, and having done so reverse the motion and wave it forwards more smartly, giving it a heave at the same time towards the point you want your bait to reach, and release the line held tight to the rod by the right hand at the same moment. The bait will fly towards the spot you aim at, carrying the line which was on the ground beside you out through the rings to its fullest extent, and, if you have managed it properly, will fall into the water with a slight splash twenty, thirty, or forty yards away; then giving the bait a moment or two to sink, according to the depth of the water you are fishing,

lower the point of the rod till it is about parallel with the surface of the water. The butt of the rod should be rested on the hip or thigh, and then with the left hand draw the line home through the rings about a yard at a time, and let it fall at your side, raising and plying the rod at every pull to make the bait shoot and dart in the water; and if this be done properly it should come spinning and darting along in a way very attractive to the pike, who, if inclined to feed, will often dash at it and single it out among a crowd of baits. When the pike seizes it, you will feel a check or a drag, more or less pronounced, at the rod top. Strike directly and smartly, and then hold him hard for a minute or two if you can, so as to be sure the hooks work home over the barbs; for a pike's mouth is very hard and gristly, and if two or three hooks chance to stick in, it requires much force to make them penetrate over the barbs; and if they do not so penetrate, the first time the pike opens his mouth and shakes his head, away come the hooks and you lose your fish. When this happens cast again directly without losing a second if your bait is still on, no matter whether it spins or no, and it is not more than about three to one that he will not seize it again directly. If, however, you give him time while you are adjusting the bait, &c., reflection will probably make him wary.

There are all sorts of theories as regards striking, but none of them are infallible, and none can always be carried out so as to have the desired effect. The alteration in the position of the fish makes all the difference, and, as there are about fifteen or twenty various points of the compass whence a fish may come at the bait, and every one alters the position, and consequently the result of the strike, perhaps one way is as good as another; so strike as is

most convenient to yourself, strike hard, and hold on, and with all that and every improvement in tackle, nothing will prevent you losing fish at times. If fish are taking well, the hooks are large, and the tackle sound, and you hit 'em hard, you will lose very few; if the reverse obtains you may lose a good many.

As to how to play him, do your best, hang on to him, and give no line unless you can't help it; a slack line is the abomination of desolation, and usually produces desolation. Beyond all, if you can, keep your fish deep in the water, and as far as you are able—and that is not very far—don't have any of that ill-judged tumbling or shaking on the top of the water. When a pike grins and flies and barks at you, like Mr. Briggs's, on the surface, it is dangerous; drop the rod point and drown the line as much as you can, and don't, whatever you do, pull at him; let him have his head free, or it is about ten to one you pull the hooks out *with his assistance.* The *shakers* are the worst sect among pike, and the *jumpers* are next; particularly big ones will often go to weed. They rush head first into a bank as big as a horse or perhaps an elephant, and grip fast hold of a big bunch with their teeth, and leave you to pull at the weed. It is about a hundred to one here that they do you. All the best pike I ever hooked, say a dozen perhaps, got off in that way.* I imagine that with the help of the weed they chew the hooks into it, and out of *them*, for you always find weed on the hooks after one of these feats,

* Except one, and that was a thirty-pounder, lost by the blundering and fright combined of the boatman, after he was dead beat and lying along the side of the boat, perfectly *supine. Ay di me!* That was a moment when my language was ornate and varied, I fear.

showing that they have had it in their mouths. "What are you to do in such a case?" Well, as I couldn't tell then, I can't tell now; if a twenty-five or thirty pound pike *will* go into weed you may break your rod over him, or your line, or both; but you won't prevent him. In fact, there is no "statute in that case made or provided," and as the Yankees say, "you must just do your darndest, I calc'late;" whatever that may be.

Be careful in landing your fish; get him in the net as soon as you can, but do it carefully and cleanly, no bungling or dashing, but a big steady scoop and a lift up, and take care he does not jump out or tumble out and leave the hooks in the net. I had that happen once to an eight-pound fish, and my poor old friend Frank Matthews, the actor, caught the same fish a quarter of an hour after, and his head is grinning at me now from the opposite wall *in memoriam*, and that was thirty-two years ago. Dear me! My phiz has altered more than yours, I expect, old acquaintance, for I can't get Coopered* like you were.

When you land your fish, unless you want to put him in the well or keep him alive, knock him on the head at once before he tangles your tackle into twenty heaps in the net, or breaks it in his flounces. Then extract the hooks carefully, and mind your fingers. A pair of stout tweezers and Rolfe's pike gag are useful here; in default of the latter, stick a bung in his mouth to keep it safely open during the extraction. A disgorger (see Plate 2, Fig. 5) to push out the hooks is also useful. Look the tackle over very carefully to see that there are no breaks

* Alluding to my old acquaintance, Mr. Cooper, the fish stuffer, who "set him up"—now, alas! gone from amongst us, but succeeded worthily by his son.—F. F.

or injury, and then re-bait, and at it again. Take 'em while they're in the humour, as that doesn't happen all day long with pike, but often only for an hour or so, when all your work must be done. In the chief season for pike fishing, viz., from November to February, inclusive, the best time runs from eleven to three in the day. You may, of course, catch fish before and after that, but that is when the cream rises, so mind you skim it carefully. In spinning, fish the water nearest to you first, and then lengthen the casts, and having fished over all the water within reach, move on.

The rate at which you spin will be a good deal determined by the depth of the water. In deeper water you must spin more slowly than in shallow, so as to give the fish more time both to see and to secure the bait; and the lead, of course, must be suited to the depth of the water. It will often happen that you have water to fish over where the weeds often approach very near the surface, and when, consequently, you need to spin as near it as possible over the top of the weeds. In this event, of course, you use no lead at all, the weight of the bait and line being quite enough: and you must also get the draw on the line as soon as possible, before even the bait makes to the weeds, or you will certainly have to make a fresh cast. Pike—big pike, especially—only feed at intervals of a day or two, or even longer, when they take a big meal, and then, like boa-constrictors, take time to digest it; the angler should remember this; it may sometimes save him from disappointment when going for some special "big 'un."

All sorts of artificial spinning baits are used for pike. Spoons, otters, phantoms, gutta-percha fish of all sorts, glass baits, plano-convexes, and kill-devils: their name is legion. A good-sized spoon is often as good as any.

All or any of them may be had at most of the fishing-tackle makers, and the angler can take his choice. After spinning, the next method of taking pike is that called trolling, with a dead gorge bait. The dead gorge hook is composed of a piece of twisted brass wire, with an eye at one end and a pair of hooks at the other; and from the hooks to some distance up the wire there is cast on to the apparatus a long plummet of lead (see Plate 2, Fig. 7). To the eye of the wire is fastened ten inches or so of gimp. When this hook is to be baited, a baiting needle is used (Fig. 6), the loop of the gimp being slipped into the eye of the needle, as shown in the cut. A gudgeon, dace, or other small fish, suitable to the size of the hook, is then selected, the point of the needle inserted into the mouth of the bait, passed down along the backbone of the fish, and out at the tail. The gimp is then pulled through, the apparatus following it until the lead is buried in the body of the bait, the hooks remaining outside on either side of the mouth. The tail is then lashed round with a piece of thread so as to secure it from slipping down (Plate 2, Fig. 8), the needle is then disengaged, and the bait looped on to the trace, which is usually about a yard of gimp, with one biggish swivel attached. The trace having been previously knotted to the reel or running line, all is now ready for action, the same rod and line as is used for spinning sufficing.

This tackle is more often used in weedy places than not, as it does not catch in the weeds like a spinning tackle. Drop the bait into the water to the full extent of the rod, letting it go almost to the bottom, which it will do with a shoot, then pull it up with short irregular jerks to the surface, making it rise and fall, and shoot hither and thither, which it will do; and having fished all the water

within reach, pitch it a yard or two further out, and so on till you have tested thoroughly all the water within your reach. When you get a bite—you will feel a sudden snatch—drop the line and the point of the rod instantly, and let the fish do what he pleases and go where he likes with the bait, giving out line freely to him, for if you check him he will probably spit out the bait and you will lose your run. When the fish has taken the bait he will require from seven to eight minutes to swallow or pouch it, and you must let him have that space of time accordingly as you think him large or small, as the large one will probably get your bait down sooner than a small one, but you must beware of striking too soon; one thing is sure, that if you do not at first you will soon learn to by losing your fish. When the time is up raise your rod point smartly and hold on as well as you can, as being probably in the midst of a lot of weeds the less line you give the better.

Sometimes when a fish takes he will not go two yards from the spot, but will lie still and pouch at his ease; sometimes, however, he will go away twenty yards or more, and in the midst of pouching even will move off again, hauling your line through masses of weeds, which is not pleasant, but has to be endured. Then you must do your best not to check him, nor if you can help it to get entangled in the weeds. No advice can be given on this head. You must just do the best you can, and be guided by circumstances. If after the fish has been only five or six minutes pouching he begins to move off, he has probably already swallowed the bait and you may chance striking him if you like to risk it, and often will land your fish; but now and then you will lose him, which, when he moves like that, you may aiblins do whether you strike or

no. The most aggravating part of the process is when you have waited patiently for the regulation ten minutes —every minute seeming ten at least—to strike and find that your fish has left you probably some eight minutes and a half or so. Indeed the waiting is a great trial, and it is not a method of pike fishing I hanker after, though in very weedy places it is not only the best but often the only method possible. The worst of it is that you must kill all the fish you hook whether they are big or little; and you often thus are obliged to kill small undersized fish, which is very objectionable.

The last method of pike fishing, and perhaps the most killing of all, is angling with the live bait. This may be done with the paternoster, as already described. For this one or at most two hooks are held to be sufficient. The lowest hook should be about a foot above the plummet, and the upper according to the depth of the water, from one foot to eighteen inches above it. Some persons use a stoutish single hook for this purpose, a size or so larger than that used for perch, and of course tied on gimp, the trace or tackle to which the hooks are fastened being of three-ply twisted gut or gimp. I like the former, as being less visible. As regards the hooks, however, instead of single hooks I prefer moderate-sized triangles, as, the pike's mouth being rough and gristly, one hook is apt to give out where two hold firmly.

One of the best double triangle tackles for live baiting, whether with paternoster or float, is that invented by Mr. Alfred Jardine, one of our most successful pike fishers. He uses two triangles, one to fix on the lip, and the other in the dorsal fin. These triangles are composed of two large hooks, and one small one, the small one projecting about half way down the shanks

of the others. The small ones are used for hooking the bait on, and Mr. Jardine says that they interfere less with the motions of the bait, and keep him alive longer than any other. In float fishing he puts the upper triangle in at the lip, and the lower or end one in at the dorsal fin. In paternostering he reverses them, and puts the upper triangle through the root of the dorsal fin, and the end one through the root of the pectoral fin. There is a space of nearly two inches of gimp bare between the triangles. This does for moderate-sized baits. The bait should be either a small gudgeon, roach, or dace. They must not be too large, as the object is to get the pike to take as much of the bait into his mouth at a gulp as possible. In small baits with single hooks or triangles it is best to hook them on through the lip, as they live longer and are more lively so; but in baits a size or so larger you should hook them on through the root of the back fin.

The method of using a paternoster for pike is just the same as that used in perch fishing, only it is best when you get a bite to give the pike a little more time before striking if possible; and when you do strike him take care never to slacken line more than you can help. When pike come into your swim while barbel or roach fishing, you may often put a bait on the ledger hook with effect; but it is as well to put a gimp hook on before doing so.

The most common method of fishing with the live bait, however, is to use a float and a single bait. This float should be a big-bellied one, made of cork, and shaped like an egg. They are made from the size of a bantam's egg for small baits up to a common hen's egg for large ones, and the tackle must be leaded sufficiently to keep the bait down into the water; and, to prevent its

coming up to the top, a small pistol bullet generally suffices for this purpose, or an ordinary spinning lead, equal to the work, is better still, as less liable to catch in weeds; this being threaded on the tackle about a foot above the bait, is either plugged or compressed at the ends, so as to secure it on the line, and keep it in its place. If painted green it is less remarkable in clear water. The tackle used is either that known as live snap tackle or live gorge tackle. The first is arranged so that the hooks may hang beside and about the middle of the belly of the bait, so that when the pike seizes the bait—which he usually does crosswise—the head and tail of the bait lying to either side of his jaws, the belly and the attendant hooks are inside his mouth, and you can then strike at once as soon as your float goes well down without further delay, and about seven times in ten you will hook your fish. In the other three it will mostly happen that the hooks are outside his mouth, or that in seizing them he has so disarranged them that they do not take a fair hold.

There are various snap tackles. The best of them is Mr. Jardine's, already described. The best single triangle snap tackle is shown in Figs. 1 and 2, Plate 3, the tackle is shown unbaited and baited. In this one the single hook is fixed, but some persons prefer a single hook that slides on a single eye like the lip hook in spinning tackle. The distance, then, being judged, two or three turns of the gimp are made round the shank to fix it. The hook is put through the lips of the bait, and the triangle is hitched up with a slight hold behind the dorsal fin. This method is thought to keep the bait alive longer. Those who prefer it can adopt it; but if the fish will take the snap tackle at all I find the other quite effective enough. All that you want to bear in mind is not to use any more roughness, nor

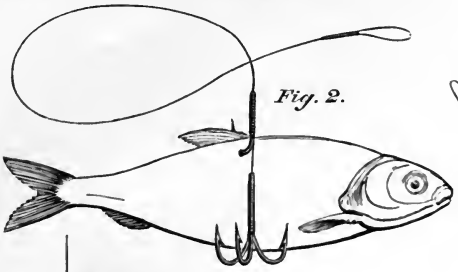


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

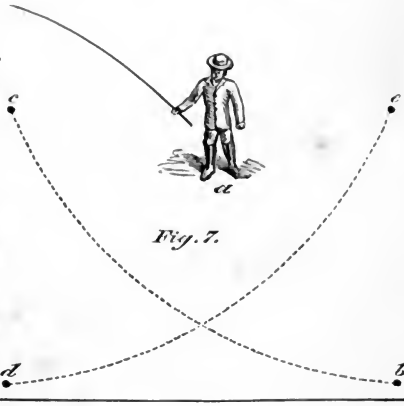


Fig. 7.

to make longer throws, than is necessary, so that the bait may not be knocked about too much.

In the Thames, and other waters like it, where the fish are much fished for, they get oftentimes very shy, and the appearance of so many large hooks about the bait will often deter pike from taking it—in this case the method of fishing with live gorge tackle is employed. I give illustrations at Fig. 3, Plate 3, of this tackle, baited and unbaited. To bait it you take a baiting needle, and slipping the loop of the gimp into the eye, insert the point of the needle into the skin at the shoulder, and, pushing the needle along under the skin, bring it out near the tail; and then drawing the gimp down until the pair of hooks are arrested by the skin, take off the needle and loop the gimp on to the trace. With this tackle you can make longer throws without losing your bait than you can with the snap hooks. When your float goes down you must give the pike time to pouch; and wherever he goes you must let off line so as not to check him in his run in the least, or he will leave the bait. Indeed he will often do so whether checked or no, and not unfrequently with snap tackle will cut the bait off, and leave your hook or line fast in a weed, which is trying to the feelings. When he has pouched, which will be in from five to eight or ten minutes, strike, and get out your fish as well as you can.

I confess that I am not much enamoured of this style of fishing and seldom adopt it, as the hooks are always down the fish's throat when you hook him, and you must kill every fish you hook, and many pound and pound and a half fish fall victims to it, which caught on snap tackle you would return to the water. Still it is a method largely adopted, particularly on the Thames, and I am compelled to notice it.

The trace for live baiting should be either of gimp or treble gut, and should have a swivel at each end of the tackle. The lower one, to which the hook link is appended, should be a hook swivel, so that the loop may easily be taken off or put on. On the running or reel line, about a yard or so above the float should be fastened a bit of cork to prevent the line from sinking and entangling with the tackle or bait. The float should be set so that the bait may be a foot or two from the bottom. Of course the presence or absence of weeds will in some measure regulate this matter. In live baiting it is very desirable that your bait should be lively and work well; when it gets dull and dead in its motions take it off and put on another. If it be a dace or gudgeon kill it, and lay it aside for spinning, for which it will do as well as the best.

When fish cannot be got for bait, frogs and other things are sometimes used. To bait a frog you want a largeish long-shanked hook, and, putting the hook through the under lip, draw it down till the bend reaches the hind leg, when tie the bend on to the frog's thigh with a bit of silk.

Artificial frogs, mice, rats, &c., are sometimes used in default of better baits. The head and tail of an eel, too, is used in some places for a rough method of spinning, but no one would use these means who could procure fish; even the artificial fly is sometimes employed for pike, though perhaps an artificial bird would be the proper name—a huge two hooked thing, with the eyes of a pair of peacock feathers for wings, and a big fur body well tinselled, is the proper lure; and when the fish will take it fairly it is by no means an unpleasant method of fishing. Cast it and work it like a salmon fly, of which more anon.

CHAPTER VI.

TROUT FISHING WITH BAIT.

THE TROUT (*Salmo fario*).

THE trout is very widely distributed, Africa being the only quarter of the globe where it is not found, and as a fish for table or for sporting purposes it is second only to the salmon. Indeed, it is a question whether on the whole, taking into consideration the means employed, the trout does not furnish as much or more sport than the salmon; if nicety and skill are any measure of sport it certainly furnishes far more.

Every means yet named of fishing for other fish can be employed against the trout—bottom fishing with bait of all kinds; middle fishing, both with spinning and live bait; and surface fishing, both with natural and artificial fly. In bait fishing, the worm, of course, takes the chief place, and there are two ways of worm fishing, one by dropping the worm into the stream, and letting it travel along the bottom while you follow it; the other by casting up and letting the bait come down towards you. The first method is more generally adopted in thick water after rain. The tackle used is generally a yard or so of gut—a No. 4, 5, or 6 round bend hook, with a No. 2 shot, about a foot above the hook, to be increased to two if the stream requires it. The worm used in this fishing is usually a small lob or dew worm—being nice and tough it stands

some knocking about, and, having to travel along the bottom and meet all sorts of obstruction, it requires that the worm should be big enough to thoroughly cover all the hook, and to leave a bit of the tail beyond the point. The angler, in a large stream, has nothing to do after baiting his tackle but to drop it into the stream he has selected, to let it find the bottom, and travel along by the weight of the stream unchecked. If the line stops suddenly, or he feels a slight pluck at the line, he probably has a bite. He must not strike directly, or the trout, having only just seized the worm, will not have the point of the hook within his mouth, and the strike would be abortive; but give him a little line, and let him have a gulp or two, and you can then strike smartly. If at the bite you feel a smart "tug, tug," at the rod point, in all probability the fish will feel it too, and will drop the worm, and will not come again.

If the fish are capricious, you will probably lose a good many bites in a day; for this kind of fishing is by no means the certainty that some people who know nothing about it consider it to be, and you lose as many or more fish in bites at the worm than you do in rises at the fly. When you have had a bite and missed your fish, you will probably have to put on a fresh worm, as the bait will be more or less torn, which trout do not much like, a fresh lively bait always having the call over a stale one. Sometimes when the line stops it has taken hold of a twig or root; in that case, if you strike, you will probably get so fast hold that a breakage will be needed. The slightest tightness of the line will tell you at once whether it is a fish or no, but this "feeling" a fish is a very delicate ticklish operation, and the fish is very apt to reject the bait when he feels there is something attached to it.

This style of fishing is much practised in small brooks, and you may often pull out lots of little speckled fellows from brooks not a yard wide in places; the small pools caused by falls and rapids being certain finds, and it requires a good deal of skill to guide the line under banks, and past stones, and close by every sheltering tussock, bush, or fern, where a trout may make his home; and to my mind it is a very pretty amusement, which does not require much preparation or tackle—and a scramble up a mountain beck after a day's rain is frequently a most delightful expedition. The most deadly way perhaps of worm fishing is that pursued with the Stewart tackle—so called because it was first written about by my late lamented friend the author of "The Practical Angler," who was in his day one of the best all-round trout fishers in Scotland. Instead of one hook of a larger size, you use three small ones, tied on at short intervals above one another. I append a sketch of the tackle, Fig. 4, Plate 3; the sketch will relieve me of any necessity for explaining the method of baiting, the head of the worm is stuck on the top hook, and a turn being taken round each hook, the tail comes on to the lowest; the size of the worm must be suited to the hooks. In fine work, a good sized brandling suffices. The advantage of this tackle is that you can strike the instant the fish seizes the bait, and you rarely miss your fish.

In fishing up stream with worm, which is by far the most skilful and killing method, you more often than not are obliged to wade. The tackle used in clear water is of the finest; a long light rod, a very little stiffer than a two-handed fly rod for trout, is useful. The hooks may either be Stewart's tackle, or a moderate sized single round bend. The brandling is the worm more generally used.

You enter the stream, making as little disturbance as possible, and, letting out as much line as you can conveniently cast, throw the bait as you would a fly, straight up stream, and let it travel down towards you, raising the point of the rod so as to feel the line as it comes home. When the bait has come within reasonable distance, pull it out with a smart, steady drag (no jerking) over your shoulder, as you would a fly, only make the sweep behind less direct and more circular, so as to avoid damaging the worm by flicking or sudden checking of it. A good worm fisher can thus cast about twice the length of his rod, and his worm usually touches the surface of the water behind him at nearly every cast. It is not easy to get well into this cast so as to avoid damage to the bait; when once it is learnt, however, it is simple enough; but, whenever you see the line stop in its downward course towards you, you must strike, as the bait is often taken in this kind of fishing while still in mid water. If you have to wade, make as little splash or wave as possible, taking a step at every cast, and pitching the bait up into every run and channel that seems likely to hold a trout. Very large bags are often made in this way of fishing. As to whether worm fishing, or for the matter of that any other kind of fishing, is sportsmanlike or not, I don't enter upon it, as these things are governed chiefly by feeling, and the custom of the country, and there is a time-honoured old motto, which says, "What is one man's meat is another man's poison." So much for worm fishing.

BEETLE, CRAB, OR CREEPER FISHING is conducted in precisely the same way as this last. The crab or creeper is the larva of the stone fly, and is found in many sandy, gravelly rivers, up to about the middle of May. Having collected a sufficient stock of them for your fishing, put

them in a tin box with wet weeds to keep them moist. I generally use a fragment of bristle on the shank of the hook, leaving a quarter of an inch or so pointing upwards and outwards a little, so that when the creeper (which is very soft and easily damaged) is drawn up on to the shank of the hook, it prevents it from slipping down on to the bend, and keeps it in its place. Use a 7 or 8 hook on fine gut, put the point in at the thorax, and bring it out at the tail, draw the creeper upon the shank, which should be just long enough down to the bend to hold it. Use one or two shot on the line as the streams may require, and cast and work it just as you would a worm casting up stream. It is a troublesome bait to fish, it being so often necessary to renew it, owing to its softness, but it is very deadly at times. Always strike when the line stops, no matter what causes it, your bait will be spoilt, so you may as well take the benefit of the doubt. The moderate streams are best for the creeper, and even pools ought not to be neglected. In every other respect what has been said of worm fishing applies here.

DIBBING or DAPING (called also SHADE FISHING) for trout resembles the same operation for chub, only you run more on flies than you do on insects, beetles, &c., for bait. A big fat greendrake or a couple of big alders, or even bluebottles being selected in preference—the hook being smaller. The method is precisely the same as is given for chub. It is a very deadly way of fishing when pursued skilfully, many big fish which cannot be got at in any other way being captured by it. It is needless to say that the angler must approach the bank with every possible caution, and when he hooks his fish he will often have to hang on to him, as his whereabouts will probably be rooty. Often, too, he will not be able to see the rise at his flies,

but will have to trust to his ear or to the sight of some slight dimple on the water caused by the rise or the slightest motion of the line—for it need hardly be remarked that if the angler can see the rise of the trout the trout can see him.

EDDY FISHING, with a small quill float and a wasp grub, or a couple of gentles, caddis, or meal worm, or any other grub, is often practised with great success when the water is thick, a few fragments of bait being now and then cast in to attract the fish.

SINKING AND DRAWING, by tying a pair of wings on the head of a hook, baiting the hook with a gentle or a caddis or two or some other grub, biting a shot on the line, and then casting it like a fly up stream, and raising and falling the point of the rod as the bait comes down, so as to make it rise and fall in the water, is another deadly method of fishing. I never practice any of these methods myself, for I think the trout deserves fairer treatment, but as others do, and think no scorn of it, I am bound at the least to mention them, though I do not enter at length on them. Lastly comes

SPINNING FOR TROUT.—Pursued in large rivers like the Thames the method followed differs very little from that practised in pike fishing, save that you use a smaller and lighter tackle, employ gut instead of gimp, and fish the sharp turbulent streams instead of the dead reaches or quiet eddies. In the days when trout fishing was worth following in the Thames, it was a pretty sight to see an adept spin a weir—how, standing on the weir beam, with a fierce stream, ready to swallow him up at the least false step, at his feet, with scarcely an effort he pitched his bait hither and thither, and worked it by some twist of the wrist and knowledge of the eddies into and out of every

hole and corner likely to hold a trout, gathering up the line like a weaver working his shuttle with one hand, and working the rod with the other; it was almost as masterly a performance, when contrasted with the splashings and dashings of the ordinary bungler, as one could well see in all the range of angling. But though the Thames will always be the head school for learning the art of spinning, I doubt if the present generation come up in point of neatness and skill to the old masters—The Tags, the Wisdoms, the Purdeys, and Rosewells, now, alas! have passed away.

The greatest requisite for success in Thames trout fishing is everlasting and unswerving patience, combined with a smartish turn of luck—and, unfortunately, the latter will often beat the former out of the field. How often have I seen a Thames trout of which I knew every spot and scale, with whom I had the most intimate acquaintance, and whose society I had cultivated for months with the nicest and most insidious art, go and throw himself away on some coarse jack fisher with a gimp hook and a 6in. gudgeon. Some chance barbeller coming in for a *rechauffé* of someone else's sport; or some poaching brat with a foul unscoured worm, a whipcord line, and a float like a peg top, who never saw him before in their lives. No; I cannot say that I am now at all given to Thames trout fishing. I worked at it hard for years; few professionals could do the trick more neatly, yet my fortune was filthy. I got worn out upon it. Now I never go out for Thames trout. The game is not worth the candle. Perseverance, and patience, and luck, then, are the best ingredients, but it is also good to have the first go over them in the morning before the boats and punts are on the move, and many a good trout has been

taken when the sun begins to air the water. If you hook a trout keep a hold on him, but don't be too rough; remember that the stream is sharp, the fish heavy, and the hooks (mostly) small; and beware of pulling at him when he is head to you down stream, as that is how six trout in ten are lost. If you are fishing in open water keep below him if you can. If you are fishing a weir, always, if possible, have your boat below it, and having hooked the fish drop into your boat and hand your rod down, and, if you can, get your fish out of the rough water. One never knows what there may be in the eddies of a weir, but weirs under the new management are not so much in favour with trout as of old. The old weirs always had a plank apron at the foot, under which the fish rooted and burrowed for often yards in extent. They were splendid trout lodgings. These are all done away with, and concrete and stone, which would not give a hiding place to a minnow, stand in place of them. This, with the filling of deep holes, the pulling out of old stumps, the abolition of old campshots, and the destruction of spawning beds by dredging, has much injured the Thames generally as a big-trout river. The houses and homes and the nurseries are gone, and the fish with them. You may keep on breeding trout by the thousand, but you will have no more good trout in your water than you have homes for.

My tackle, shown at Fig. 2, Plate 2, is, I consider, the very best invention for Thames trout, as it spins a small dace beautifully, keeps him in condition for a long time, and is very unobtrusive to the view; and if the big tail hook does chance to get on, good bye to Trouty; unless there is a flaw in the gut he will have to come ashore. As I have already said, the directions I have given for pike spinning answer here.

In spinning for small trout with a minnow a different kind of tackle is used. The rod is lighter, and capable of being swung and used with one hand. The spring should be something between that of a bait rod and a fly rod. The rings upright, of course, as is the case with all spinning rods; the line the finest dressed silk; the trace of moderate trout gut, and two or three swivels, and the tackle suited to the size of the minnows you are likely to use. This does not vary much, and a very little manipulation is required to accommodate the bait to the tackle. Some people like one kind of tackle, and some another—some like small hooks and some large. The old three triangle pattern is not unfrequently used; but this again is often modified by using pairs instead of triangles, leaving only a single hook projecting. I do not care about these tackles, but incline to the larger hooked species. The earliest of these was one large round bend long shanked hook, which was passed in at the mouth of the minnow, and so on down along the spine till it was brought out at the tail, the tail being crooked on the bend of the hook; but above the shank of the hook there was a small hook, used as the lip hook, to hold the minnow up on the big hook, and this being passed through the lips of the minnow, the tackle was baited; but I found that this arrangement often allowed fish to run and take hold of the bait lightly between these two hooks, and to escape being hooked at the strike, and so a large percentage of runs were lost unless the fish were very hungry. I therefore added a small triangle on a thread of gut, to be inserted midway (as shown in Fig. 5, Plate 3).

For many years I used this tackle and no other, and found it in streams all I could wish; but when I came to fish on the Scotch lakes I often found that my minnow

would get out of spinning, and that I either had to be constantly hauling in some forty or fifty yards of line to see how it worked, or I had to chance its wobbling, when perhaps for half an hour no fish would look at it, until it was corrected. Thereupon I set my wits to work. I had by me a fan made of German silver, which was sent to me by some tackle maker, and which worked on the gut, and slid up and down so as to jam tightly when pressed down on the head of the hook. I made me a tackle somewhat like the one last depicted, only the big hook was a bit smaller and shorter in the shank. The hooks being baited, the tail is not crooked, but the big hook comes out about two-thirds down, as shown in Plate 3, Fig. 6, and then the fan is pushed on down to the shank of the lip hook, and jammed tight there. This form of tackle not only spins beautifully, but it *always* spins and never gets out of order. For trailing, in lake fishing, no tackle can beat this.

Now suppose that your rod is ready, and your tackle baited, the ordinary plan in a largish stream is to wade, if you cannot command the stream without, and to cast down stream towards either bank of the river, drawing across stream, in a bend round towards the opposite side, and then repeating the cast in the opposite direction; look at Fig. 7, Plate 3, thus a man standing at "a" casts first towards "b," and draws round the dotted line to about "d," then he casts towards "e," and draws round towards "f." Some persons, particularly if fishing with an artificial minnow, which cannot be deranged, cast over head, fly-fashion, as they can cast more line that way; but with the natural bait this is apt to derange it, and spoil its spinning. The casts, therefore, are chiefly made underhand. These, from the nature of things, in the ordinary

way cannot fail to be rather short. You cannot, when walking on rough banks, or wading, have loose line hanging about; but you may get a much increased length of cast by employing the Nottingham mode of casting a light dace float, already explained and depicted at Fig. 4, Plate 1. By this means any reasonable length likely to be needed can be commanded. Some anglers prefer to spin upstream and draw down; but the bait must spin very well to do much execution at it; still, I have seen fish killed in very clear water thus, which would hardly have come to bag fishing down. The method of casting, &c., is precisely the same as that for down fishing, the draw being, of course, somewhat more rapid.

The necks of the sharp streams in rough, rapid, or even white water are the best spots to spin for trout. In open and moderate water the trout soon learn to grow shy of the minnow, and constantly come provokingly short at it. When you see a trout come at the minnow, and follow it, don't be flurried, but spin steadily on, or any sudden stop or change will probably frighten the fish altogether: whereas, just as the bait enters the bend, and as it rises towards the surface at the end of a draw, he is very likely to make a dash at it—or if he declines that cast he may take it the next; strike smartly but not too heavily, *when you feel a touch*, and not before—indeed feeling should supersede seeing in this matter, and the less you see the better. I once saw a seven pound trout come at my bait at Sunbury; I saw his great white mouth open, and the bait disappear, and I struck. I felt nothing at all, the bait uninjured came one way, and the trout of course went another. If I had not *seen* that fish, I most likely would have waited till I felt him, when I should have hooked him. But to this day I never can make out

how it was I did not hook, or even touch him, when I saw a bait with ten or eleven hooks on it disappear apparently into his cavernous mouth. When you have hooked your fish, take care that you do not let him have any slack line; this advice, though good for all kinds of fishing, is extra good in spinning.

When the water is rising after rain is always the best chance for the spinner for small trout. The fish are all then on the look out for stray food, and will snap at the minnow freely. Minnows are often difficult to get fresh at the time they are wanted, and if you have no tank or corfe to keep them in, the only way left is to preserve them. Some persons salt them; but, though I hold the opinion that fish like the taste of salt, it destroys the colour of the bait, and makes it so soft that it will hardly stay on the hooks at times. The best way is to get a pickle bottle, fill it with minnows, and then pour in spirit up to the bung. It will not require very much, and the very best spirit you can employ is pure spirits of wine. It keeps the bait bright and well coloured, toughens it, and has comparatively little smell to it, which is not always the case with some spirits. I have seen them kept in good spirits of wine in fine order for a twelvemonth and more. Be sure you do get pure spirits of wine, for if you get methylated the smell is most objectionable to the fish. I have heard that a bottle of glycerine does equally well, but I have never tried it. If it does as well it would do much better. To carry a few minnows out with you alive, a soda water bottle with a quill through the cork is a very good plan, you may easily accommodate and keep a score or more thus, now and then changing the water. Always kill your minnow and see that it is quite dead before putting it on the hooks; take care of this, not only to

avoid needless cruelty, but as long as there is any life in the bait it will probably interfere with its spinning. If you throw the minnow smartly on the hard ground death is instantaneous.

Some one of the various methods of using a live bait for pike and perch may be applied to a trout. A paternoster or a float—which latter should be a fragment of cork sufficient to carry the bait. Not more than one hook should be used, and this set a little below midwater (a small triangle perhaps is better than a single hook). Hook the bait through the lip, as it lives longer and is more lively thus. Minnows, small gudgeons, or dace are the best live baits.

CHAPTER VII.

FLY FISHING FOR TROUT.

Fly Fishing.—I now come to not only the most sportsmanlike, but the most delightful method of trout fishing. One not only endeared by a thousand delightful memories, but by the devotion of many of our wisest and best men for ages past; and, next to my thanks for existence, health, and daily bread, I thank God for the good gift of fly fishing. If the fishes are to be killed for our use, there is no way in which they are put to so little pain as in fly fishing. No minnow is dashed on the ground, no worm impaled upon a hook. The fish rises, takes your fly as though it were his ordinary food; the hook fixes in the hard gristly jaw, where there is little or no sensation. After a few struggles he is hauled on shore, and a tap on the head terminates his life; and so slight is the pain or alarm that he feels from the hook, that I have over and over again caught a trout with the fly still in his mouth which he has broken off in his struggles an an hour or even half-an-hour previously. I have seen fish that have thus broken off swim away with my fly in their mouths and begins to rise at the natural fly again almost directly.* What becomes of the "agonies and

* Strangely enough, since this was in the printer's hands, I have twice taken a fish which broke away with my fly not five minutes before, and caught the same fish with the same fly in his mouth, and on both occasions retrieved my lost fly. The fish were 1½lb. fish, and were both caught in the Test, at Stockbridge, in the third week of April. The one took two olive duns, the other two grannoms. There is no doubt at all that if there is any question of pain, the fish really suffer more in a net.

pangs," &c., &c., which humanitarians are so fond of inventing; and in all reverence I would ask, if the hook were so cruel in its application, would Our Lord have ordered Peter to cast a hook into the sea in order to catch a fish, and take the tribute money therefrom. It would have been as easy for Him to tell the fish to come to the bank and deliver up the coin. I have put this point to many soft-hearted persons, and I have never known one who could answer it yet. Then I am told I do it for sport solely, and not for any necessity. This is not altogether true. I like trout myself, and so do many of my friends. The trout are meant to be eaten. The sport appears to me harmless, cheerful, healthy; and why should I not catch my own or my friend's breakfast or dinner if it suits me to do so, and I find a great advantage (as I do) by doing so? Not that fly fishing requires any support or extenuation from me.

Fly fishing for trout is carried on either with a single or double-handed rod, by far the larger number of its votaries using the former. The single-handed rod is usually a rod of from nine to twelve feet in length; it may even be a few inches longer or shorter in exceptional cases, a good medium rod being from ten to eleven feet. They are made of various woods, hickory, greenheart, and split bamboo being the chief.

The lighter a rod is, combined with sufficient power for its need, and the better balanced it is in the hand, the less it tires the arm that wields it, and though a rod will only weigh from eight to fourteen ounces, yet even that weight, with the leverage exercised by the line in a long day's fishing, makes the muscles of the hand and arm very glad of a rest or change. Greenheart, as the heaviest wood, might be supposed to give the heaviest rod, but the wood

is so close in the grain, and so hard, that it requires less bulk to produce the same result. Perhaps the lightest rods of all are the split bamboo, which are made of lengths of bamboo glued together, and bound every two inches. But though light to the hand they are heavy to the pocket, and when anglers can get a fairly good rod which answers all their needs for 25*s.*, few of them will give 6*l.* or 8*l.* for one, however superior the workmanship. There is a new wood, called washaba, which has come up lately: it is a very good wood, and almost equal or a little inferior to hickory.

When buying a rod, the intending purchaser should always put the reel on, as it greatly alters the balance of the rod, and if he could thread the line and try a cast or two he would do better still.

Having selected a rod, the next thing is to choose a line. Some people like dressed silk; I, however, prefer plaited or twisted horsehair and hemp, nicely tapered, and not too long in the taper; as half the lines are. But the great thing in choosing the line is to choose one which the rod will carry to the best advantage without straining. Too light a line is a perfect nuisance in windy weather, you cannot get it through the wind a bit, and even without wind it does not cast properly; while if it is too heavy it falls with a splash, and strains every splice and joint in the rod. It requires some knowledge and familiarity with a variety of fly rods to be able to pick out a suitable line for one; and if the angler is not equal to it, he had better go to a respectable tackle maker and let him choose it. The winch should be a plain check winch, just strong enough in the check to prevent the line over-running, but not so strong as to make it hard to run out when a fish happens to pull on it—one capable of holding thirty or forty yards of line is large enough.

Having suited himself with rod, line, and winch, and passed the line through the rings, the angler must tie or loop on to the reel or running line, a collar of single gut, moderately stout at the upper end, and fining down to the end to which the artificial fly is to be fixed. Some people have a loop in the line here, and, having another on the fly link, loop the fly on, but this makes a thick place with double lashings or knots some two inches long about eight or nine inches above the fly, and in fine water becomes very visible. I always knot the fly link on to the collar, or casting line, as it is usually called, just as though it were a part of the line itself.

Sometimes the angler uses a dropper, or even two or three. These are flies tied on to the casting line at intervals of eighteen inches or two feet. I seldom use more than one dropper under any circumstances, as I find I can kill quite as many fish with two as I can with three or four flies, and more than two are apt to tangle or catch in weeds or twigs. When I use a dropper I pick out a good sound knot about two feet or two and a half above the tail fly or stretcher, and having reduced the gut on the dropper fly to about five inches in length, and tied a knot firmly at the extreme end, so that the gut shall not slip, I tie or knot the fly on just above the knot in the casting line—one tie is usually enough, but two make it very secure—and, drawing the tie home above the knot, the tackle will usually stand any fair strain that is put on the dropper.

Now, having suited himself with tackle and flies, the angler should draw off rather more running line than the length of the rod, and, waving the rod back smartly over his right shoulder, having given the line time to extend itself to the fullest in the air behind him, he should wave

the rod forward somewhat more smartly, with a cutting or flogging action, towards the spot where he wishes his fly to fall, and, if he has followed my counsel accurately, the line will fall straightly upon the water in the direction desired. When he has brought the rod forwards so that it stands at about an angle of forty-five degrees, he should check it, and as the line falls, lower it gently another twenty or thirty degrees, so as to allow the fly to fall softly on the surface, and to travel lightly and unchecked down the stream. In making the forward impulse of the rod, after having sent the line back behind him, the angler should be careful to give the line time to fully extend itself. If he does not he will probably hear a crack like the faint flick of a whip, only sharper, and if he then looks at his gut he will find that he has cracked his fly off. In order to avoid this as much as possible, it is desirable not to throw the line straight back, and then straight forward, but, when the line has extended, to make a slight sweep or curve with the rod point so that the fly may also travel in a curve instead of a sharp angle. Some anglers make this curve away from the face or shoulder, others towards it, I prefer making it away from the face, as the more upright the rod is when you withdraw the line from the water the better and quicker it comes off it.

Windy weather, particularly if the wind is in your favour, greatly facilitates the flicking off of flies, as it prevents the line from thoroughly extending itself behind before the cast is made. In such a wind special care should be taken if the angler does not want to lose his fly. The outline of a long jargonelle pear starting from the stem round over the eye and so back to the stem again, will give some notion of the sort of curve the rod point

should travel over, particularly in windy weather with a wind in your favour.

Some people in fly-fishing like a ripple, and the wind this or that way. This may be very well in a lake, or in a mill head, or any similar still, quiet water, but on streamy water, if the day is cloudy, I can do very well without any wind at all—my experience of fly-fishing being that nineteen-twentieths of your successes depend upon how you put your fly to the fish, and you cannot have full command over your fly, and put it where you please, if you have much wind in any direction. I do not at all object to a good rough upstream wind in a still mill head, but in such cases you do not fish the rises or the fish, you fish the water, probably, with a wet fly, and chance what may come of it, and sometimes a good deal comes of it, but that is a very different thing from putting your fly neatly over a rising fish and inducing him to mistake it for the brother of the one he has just swallowed. That is the acme of fly fishing. But I am teaching my pupils to run before they can walk, and I must return on my steps.

Having thoroughly mastered the length of line he first put out, so as to be able to throw it in any direction he desires straightly and truly, the angler may let out more and more line until he reaches the outside of his capability, which, with a ten foot or eleven foot rod, will be something more or less under twenty yards. Say fifty feet, and that is from four and a half to five times the length of the rod, which will perhaps be as much as he ever will master. But throwing a line is one thing, and having full command of it after you have thrown it, is quite another. How often, when I have hurled out a tremendous line, have I seen my fish come up fairly, only to be scratched or

boggled!—moral, the angler should only cast so much line as he has perfect command over—not a foot more. Such line as he can raise off the water cleanly, smartly, and without drag or effort, he will probably be able to command a fish well with in the water; but when it comes to tearing the line out of the water by the roots, as it were, the length of line out is unmanageable and bad. When a fish rises, much depends upon the position the angler occupies with respect to the fish, as to how he must strike. If the fish be below him, down stream, the line will probably be fully extended, and will weigh on the rod top. At such a time a very slight twitch indeed of the rod top is enough to fasten the fly. A heavy tug will probably result in a break, and the fish will go off with the fly in his mouth. When the fish is upstream, and the line coming home, it is sure to be more or less in a bag, and the angler must strike more or less smartly to overcome the slack line. Experience and practice alone can tell him how hard he ought to strike, and often when he knows this full well his hand will not second his desire; but on a sudden and unexpected rise he will hit too hard —the more particularly so if he is addicted to salmon fishing, and the various methods used for coarse fish, when the tackle is much less fine, and the striking usually much harder.

To be a perfect trout fisher, to my mind, a man should follow no other branch of fishing. It spoils his hand if he does. I myself, from the practice of striking so hard in both salmon, pike, and other fishing, used to lose numbers of fish and flies in the course of the season; and what made it the more vexing was that they were nearly always the best and heaviest fish. At Winchester they used to have a sort of proverb about me. "Why, he

loses more fish than any man in Winchester, John," said a severe critic one day to old John Hammond, that most artful old provider of fishing requisites. "What did you say, sir?" said John, putting his hand up to his ear—for he very often couldn't hear anything he did not want to. The criticism was repeated. "Ah," said the sly old being, with a couple of nods of the head, and two taps on the lid of his snuff-box, "but then he hooks more!" After which a very bad fit of deafness came over him for a minute or two, till a little boy came in for a "'apeny hook and a withy," and turned the conversation. Since that time, however, I have done less coarse fishing, devoting my attention to the grayling when the time for coarse fish comes on, and the result has been most striking —I now lose less fish than many of the single-hand rod men. When you are given to too heavy striking, the best provision you can adopt is to lighten your rod and tackle: have a lighter or more flexible rod, and a lighter line.

Between the extremes up and down stream there are all sorts of graduations. When the line is extended straight across the stream, and the fish takes it broadside on, it is nearly as bad as when he is straight down, and requires quite as light a touch. When the fish are small, as in some lochs and burns, you require much sharper and quicker striking than is the rule in our heavier southern rivers; but experience must teach the angler all this, and will do so better than all the precepts in existence.

Having struck your fish, keep his head as tight as you can without being too rough, and don't let him get into weeds *if you can help it*, for there *are* times when neither you nor any one else can help it. For any fish from three pounds weight up for the first five minutes or so will take you just where he pleases, let you be ever so clever; for

you won't hook him without pretty fine tackle, and you can't pitch him over your head with that. Still, you will often be able to get a fish out of a dangerous locality by prompt measures, which you would lose without; for I generally regard a fish hung up on weeds as about two-thirds gone, for you don't save one in three. I don't know how it is, but I believe they hang on to the weed with their mouths, and let you pull against the weed if you do pull, and if you don't in time the weed gets round the line, and there you are! Polling out or cutting out is very risky work. Yet *que voulez vous*? If the fish are much given to "weeding" a long light fir pole with a hook knife on it, kept somewhere within 50 or 100 yards off you, would no doubt enable you to cut the weed off close to the roots, for less than that is dangerous, as you might cut the line. The only thing to do with the rod is to go down stream, put a steady but not *heavy* strain on in the same direction the weed lies. The fish may (if he does not get free) get tired and let go, or the weed clear itself. The chance is not much of a one, still it is the only one.

When a fish is first hooked, if he be in a weedy place, get a strong pull at him at once before he knows where he is or what you are about, and lug him out of it. If you leave him there, he will be sure to go into the weeds sooner or later, so you may as well try conclusions with him at once. I have often lugged a pound fish over a bed of weeds a *yard* wide, and, more, by taking the initiative. Where a fish bores determinedly in a weed, root or hole, you must try and slant his head another way, and if that does not do just hold on and let him do his worst. You may as well lose him at first as at last after half an hour's roking and poking, loss of time, and aggravation.

Don't pull hard at a trout when he is down stream, more particularly if he lies head up towards you. It is a dangerous thing to do. If you *can*, always keep below your fish, and coax him down. In the first place he won't disturb the water so much, and in the next it is the safest way to deal with a fish, and the quickest method of tiring him.

When you are going to land your fish, don't be in a hurry nor in a flurry; bring the fish steadily round within reach, let the netsman stand with the net under water, so that the fish may, almost, as it were, be led into it and until the fish is almost within the ring the less obtrusive or active the netsman is the better. When he sees the fish within his power a steady upward sweep will do the business. More fish are lost by dashing at them, and more aggravation also caused thus than by almost any other means. The Irishman who having dashed at a salmon with the gaff, and scratched him, after his master had with incalculable patience and skill humoured the fish in out of most dangerous ground, and when another minute's patience would have safely secured the fish, and who stood exclaiming with pride and delight, "Begorra, I hot him that toime!" may or may not be a satisfactory picture, but the feelings of the master who sees his fish go clean the other side of that particular rock, which the less said about the better—is a picture also, which likewise perhaps the less is said about the better. If you have a man who is a bungler, take the net and land your fish yourself, and when you get him home at night, you may call him "Cassio" if you please, and you may even "love him well," but be sure that "he never more be officer of thine." Having got your fish on shore, your operation is complete, knock the fish on the head, and put him in the basket, never let the poor wretch die of slow suffocation—

even as a matter of economy—for it spoils the fish, and he won't keep nearly as long.

If I have advised the angler to be as unobtrusive as possible when fishing for other fish, this caution is needed ten times more in fishing for so wary a creature as a trout—even small trout soon get to know their way about when they have tasted steel; but a good fish, and particularly a veteran, is I do believe, next to a red deer, one of the wariest, downiest, artfullest things within civilised creation. Where they are very little fished for of course they are unsuspicious, but they very soon learn to know when they are fished for. They soon get accustomed to the sight of people walking along the banks if there be a footpath near, but they know a fly or the wave of a rod with very little practice. When fish are as wary as they are in some of the Hampshire waters, you can't be too circumspect; and at times it is almost desirable, if you want to catch fish, to swarm along on your stomach as you do in deer stalking; when the water is at all open, you must go down on your knee, or get the stump of a tree or a bank at your back, which will often serve you well with the wariest trout.

There is an old controversial matter among fly-fishers, whether you should fish up or down stream, and, like everything else in fishing, it depends on circumstances. For example, at night you would almost always fish down, because, having to trust very much to feeling, you want a tight line; again, if you are fishing with the dry fly, and the wind is dead down stream, you can't fish up, particularly if you are fishing the floating drake or dry May fly; but even when you are obliged under these circumstances to cast down stream, you don't drag your fly up against it—only when fishing at night, or in very small streams

where the trout are small and unsophisticated, would you do this. No! though you cast down you let your fly travel down with the stream as far as you can, just as you do when fishing or casting up stream; you merely cast rather short, and, letting the fly fall in the water, with the rod pretty upright, so as to have a good supply of line in hand, lower the rod slowly until you can let no more, and under these circumstances this very often (if you can keep well out of sight) answers as well or better than fishing up to fish, because the fly, and not the line, comes over his nose first. This is called drifting, and by the practice of it I have caught many good trout on bright days and stillish water, but it requires much care and caution, not to say usage, to do it well; but the great bulk of the casting is made rather across, than either up or down. You see a fish rise, and you cast across and above him, and let the fly travel down so as to come over his nose, but to let as little of the line do so as possible. The first and last object of the fly fisher is to show as much of his fly to the fish as possible, and as little of anything else. Let that be his constant and unvarying study if he desires to catch fish, for it is the backbone of fly fishing. In fishing with the wet fly in the early months, you fish down stream if the wind is adverse, but you cast across and let the fly sweep round; at such times, however, you do not wait to see rises but fish the water on the chance of one.

Always pay particular attention to the fish which you see rising under the banks; and don't be deluded into the notion that because you see a fish make no more break on the water than a minnow would, that he *is* a minnow, for he is quite as likely to be a three pounder. It is strange how quietly a big fish will often take fly after fly, close to a bank, with only just his upper lip put to the surface to

suck in the victim; you think him "trash," and make a careless bungling cast, and—"whoosh!" Who would have thought it? Off he goes, with a furrow like a four-oar.

Fish taking under banks, whether in your own side or opposite, always take much better than fish rising in the open stream; they are close at home, and have shelter at hand, and have more confidence. It requires great nicety of casting often times to get fish out from under your own or an opposite bank; they lay there almost touching, and rising within an inch of the bank, and you must cast within an inch of the bank too. It is of no use to cast six or eight inches or more this or that side of it—dozens of flies pass along out there which the trout never notices—for he knows that enough will pass within an inch above his nose to afford him a good full meal without any need of his swimming a foot for it; and, if you want to rise him, your fly must come over him too. In a fish of this kind, too, it is not safe to drop your fly within much less than a yard of him, about four feet above him is perhaps the proper thing; and if it comes fairly to him, and no twig or spine of grass, or bunch of weed outside, catches the line and causes the fly to do queer things, and the fly happens to appear to be of the same sort that his worship is devouring, or there is nothing objectionable about it, you will see that magic dimple as your line is passing the spot, and find that you have an interest in that performance if you tighten the line.

I need not say to the angler cast lightly and don't splash, for if he does, he will very soon find out the importance of these instructions for himself; nor need I further add that it will be conducive to sport to present your fly to the trout as like a fly as possible, either alive or dead—it matters very little, perhaps, which.

I won't enter on the argument as to why one should imitate nature in his flies as closely as possible. If any one wishes to learn why this should be done, they can find it set out at length in my "Book on Angling;" but I have no space for that, or many other matters here. I recommend the angler to imitate nature, myself. If the angler is content to take his advice and instruction from me, well and good, if not, let him go elsewhere. Accidental flies and general flies, no doubt, catch fish, and often abundantly at times, but there are dozens of times, when the fish are feeding on some particular fly, and when, if you happen to have a good imitation of that fly, you can fill your basket; and, if you have not, a bare fish or two will be all your take, and often you will not catch even that. Only last season I fished down about three-quarters of a mile of water, trying two or three duns—I got four or five rises, and caught one fish. I came back to the top (the fish were rising incessantly all the time I fished), I changed the fly for an exact imitation of the one on the water, and, going over the same water a second time, I got over thirty good rises, and hooked seven or eight brace of fish. Of course the first time you go over a water in the day is by far the most favourable time, if the fish are rising.

Now, there are two ways of fishing your fly, the one, and the most common one, is with the wet fly; the other, and the more scientific, is with the dry. The wet fly is cast upon the water time after time, and usually sinks, more or less, beneath the surface, and it can only be taken for a drowned fly or some other water insect. In this case you will often not see the rise of the fish, and you must have one eye on the line, and when you see it check or stop, strike instantly. There are waters in many parts of the country, however, where, after about the middle of May,

unless you happen on a very rough and wet day, the fish will not take a wet fly. They get suspicious and well educated. The weather is fine and moderate, and they really see very few drowned flies about, and, consequently, they look pretty closely at one when it comes along, and their quick sight soon detects the peculiar blue curly barbed tail which the drowned fly possesses. At such times they feed freely on the live insect sitting up and floating on the surface of the water, and you have, therefore, to imitate that as closely as possible, and by whipping the fly backward and forward four or five times (or more if needed) between each cast, all the wet is shaken out, and the line and fly are so far dried that they float on the surface for some distance, until the draft of the stream submerges and wets them again.

In casting the dry fly, send the line as straight as possible and without any waves or curls on the water, and allow it to float down over the head of the fish as like the natural fly as possible, and without any pull or guidance.

If you pull it at all, the line will make a streak on the surface, and will certainly frighten the fish. In fishing the wet fly, it is often a good plan, in deep waters or holes, to let the fly sink as deep as you can; you may even facilitate its sinking by biting a shot on the line at the head of the fly; and by jerking it through the water with short jerks it will often tempt the fish which are not feeding on the top, as they will mistake it for some larva. Therefore, the code of regulations as regards wet, dry, and sunk flies, comes pretty much to this: in the early part of the season, or on rough and rainy days, you may fish with the wet fly; but in the latter portion, and fine weather, use the dry. In hatch holes, deep mill heads or tails, or such places, where the fish are big, and feed

more on minnows, shrimp, and larva than flies, sink your fly. As general directions, these will be found pretty reliable.

Though I do not like night fishing, and indeed would never allow it on any good water, yet you go at times to places where it is practised, and where your only chance of catching a good fish is at night. Fish by sight if you can, that is, if the light shines enough on the water to detect the circles made by the rise; but if you cannot see, then you must fish down, and, keeping a tight line, fish by feeling the rise, and you cannot be too quick in your strike when you do feel a touch, as the trout reject the fly as quickly as they take it; but it is pokey work at the best. You fish with a short line and a stout; you cannot see where your fish is going, and you hang on and get him out anyhow. There is no nicety in throwing, and if you happen to be wading, and you do not make any disturbance, the fish will rise within a yard of you.

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUT FLIES.

And now we must say a word or two as to that important subject, flies. The best flies to use are imitations of those which are born in the water; for, though trout will often take land flies, and indeed almost any insect you can throw on the water, yet it is on the water-flies which he chiefly depends for his sustenance, and these are the flies which, for the most part, fill the following list:

LIST OF FLIES FOR EACH MONTH.

March.—The blue dun, hare's ear, the March brown, the coch-y-bonddhu,* and sometimes the olive dun. You rarely want more than these flies, though in some rivers a little creeper is found.

April.—All the last month's flies, with the olive dun, red spinner, and on bright days the yellow dun.

May.—Many of the old flies are good still, though the March brown begins to give place to the alder; and the blue dun only shows now and then in cold days. The black gnat often shows up strong. The duns now vary from yellow or almost green to the palest lemon, and where

* Dress this large, about March brown size, and rib with gold tinsel, and it is a capital rough water fly, to use wet all the season nearly.

it is found the little iron blue dun or watchet, as it is called in the north, does well.

June.—Most of the old flies will still come in at times, and you may add the sedge, very slight variations of which will also include the sand fly, the cinnamon, and the mushroom. It is a capital fly on very many waters. Early in June, the celebrated green and grey drakes appear, and the fish have their great gorge of the season. The quill gnats are excellent flies now.

July is a bad month as a rule, and few new flies come in. The duns and quill gnats will be found the best day flies, with sedges, alders, &c., for the evening.

August.—The old flies still prevail. A fly which we call the dark-winged olive comes on in the evening on many rivers, and is good now to the end of September.

September.—Add to all the old flies the whirling blue dun, and the willow flies, and that is all that is new in September.

General Flies.—To these ordinary natural flies there are certain flies called general flies, which, bearing a general or fancied resemblance to various flies, are taken by the fish. These are *The Francis, the Governor, Hammond's Adopted, Hoffland's Fancy, the Coachman, the Wickham, the Partridge and Grouse Hackles,* and *the Caperer.*

With the above collection of flies, which is pared down as close as it may well be for *general* work, the angler ought to be able to do good service on any stream, regard being had to the size of the flies, which must be a good deal smaller on some streams than on others. There are special flies suited to special streams, or flies that are only partial, as, for example, the grannom, the spider fly, &c.—very useful for particular rivers here and there, but I do

not deal with particular rivers here; and for any extension in that direction the angler must again consult the "Book on Angling." As to the dressing of the various flies named, the duns come first, and here hooks from 11 or 12 up to 8 or 9 will be used. I need hardly counsel the use of fine gut for the smaller flies, as if the angler does not use it he will have few fish to show. On some rivers they use not only flies but collars or casting lines of single horse-hair; and they are all very well in moderate weather, but do not do in a wind, nor where the fish run over half a pound or so. The duns are the grand stand-by of the fisherman. These are of all colours, from a dark slatey blue to the palest possible ash, and from a deep yellow to the faintest lemon almost white, apple green, olive, and dark iron blue.

The blue dun should have a slate blue quill body, legs of a dun freckled cock's hackle; some use a dark honey dun hackle with yellowish tips and a smoky blue centre, with two strands of the same for the tail—wings from the starling's wing, more or less dark. By lightening the shades of all these feathers and the body you may carry the fly on to the representation of other duns which come in later on in the season.

The yellow dun.—The same process is followed here. Taking a yellow silk body and medium honey dun hackle with moderate starling wing, you get them lighter and lighter till you get the body the faintest lemon or straw colour, the hackle the lightest honey dun, and the wings of the pale blue feather of the sea-swallow or roseate tern, which is Mr. Aldam's dressing for one of the best summer flies you can put on, and hitherto almost impossible to imitate. The above two series will give some seven or eight different shades of duns which come on during the

season under different names, and which are invaluable to the angler.

The olive dun is another very useful fly used a good deal through the season. The body should be dressed of a dark olive silk, or quill more or less stained olive yellow, with a turn of gold tinsel at the tail end—some rib it with yellow silk, or even fine gold wire—the hackle olive, with two strands of the same for the tail; the wings of starling, darker or lighter. This fly varies considerably. Some years you may stain the wings lightly with onion dye, and both legs and body are more or less yellow. Hooks 9, 10, and 11.

The hare's ear, one of the earliest and best flies used. It comes on in March, and may be used at intervals throughout the season. The body and legs are of hare's ear fur, darker or lighter, with starling wing, also darker or lighter. Some rib it with fine gold tinsel.

The blue dun is best dressed as the blue quill described at page 118.

The yellow dun runs so closely into the yellower kinds of olive that there is little or no difference. It should have a yellow silk body, not too dark, pale yellow olive hackle and light starling wing.

Little iron blue—a dark slate quill body, a dark blue feather from the cormorant's wing, the tomtit's tail, or the moorhen's breast, for a wing, hackle a shade or two lighter than the body, or light grey even to straw colour, for it varies a good deal, with a couple of short strands for the tail. Later editions of this fly come out as the season goes on, but they are mostly lighter in colour, and with a fine yellow silk ribbing. It changes to the

Jenny Spinner, a fly which fish take voraciously at times, but which is hard to imitate; a watery whitish floss

silk body, with a turn of brown at the head and tail, and a pale silvery blue hackle for legs and wings, is as good as anything.

The red and brown spinners are the changes undergone by the blue and yellow duns. The red spinner should be dressed with a deep brownish red, a sort of burnt sienna floss silk for the body, ribbed with fine gold tinsel; a red hackle for legs, and two strands of the same for the tail, a very light bit from a young starling's wing for the wings. I have used pale blue hackle points for these, and very successfully. The brown spinner is a somewhat similar fly, dressed two or three shades paler. Some call it "the sherry spinner," from its colour. There are two or three shades of this fly, some with bluish or greenish olive bodies of quill. It is best dressed hacklewise, with a hackle pale straw colour or silvery dun, or even whiteish, with dark streak down the centre.

The March brown kills more fish than any other fly where it is found. It comes thickly out on many rivers, and at a period when the fish are hungry. The body is made either of brown crewel or hare's fur, lighter or darker, according as you wish to vary the fly from male to female, ribbed with straw coloured silk or gold tinsel; legs, a partridge's back feather; wing, the mottled feather from a hen pheasant's wing, woodcock, or the wings of a game hen; tail, two strands from the same; hooks, from 7 or 8 to 10 or 11.

The alder, another very useful fly, comes in as the March brown dies out. It is dressed with a mixture of peacock harl, and black ostrich harl, for the body, with a turn of mulberry silk at the tail; a rusty black or dusty iron blue hackle; wing from peacock's back feather or a brown hen's rump; hook 8 to 10.

The sedge, a famous fly through Hampshire and the midland districts; body stoutish and of buff or brown crewel; sandy red hackle from head to tail, ribbed over the reverse way with fine gold tinsel; under wing, a little starling; upper wing, landrail or hen pheasant. Make the body slender, and of a browner hue, and do away with the tinsel and the under wing, and you get *the sand fly*. Make this again more creamy in the body, and you obtain *the cinnamon*.

The quill gnat.—This is a very useful fly, and is found on the water previous to and throughout the Mayfly season and even later. The body is made of a strip of the bluish quill of the starling, which forms a natural ribbing; legs, a red hackle; wing, lightish starling; the tail being two whisks of silver dun hackle. Another kind of quill gnat is dressed with a medium blue dun hackle, and a slightly darker wing and tail. Hooks 10 to 12.

The black gnat.—The smallest possible hook, lapped round with a few turns of short black ostrich harl for body, two turns of small black hackle for legs, and a little slip of light or very dark starling, for it varies, for wing, form the best representation of it. There are two or three black gnats, and unless you have the right one you will not kill.

The willow fly.—This is a curious fly which may be found on the water of different sizes at different times of the year late and early. It is a flat winged fly, the wings —of which it has two pairs—lying one over the other flat down the back. The body may be made of starling quill; the hackle, freckled dun. The wings are exactly the colour of an alder's, and the rump of a red hen, or a bit of clear speckled hen pheasant might do. Hooks Nos. 10

and 11. The little needle brown may be dressed on the same lines, but smaller.

The whirling dun, a useful late August and September fly. Body, a couple of strands of blue heron hackle, or back feather warped like harl; buff silk ribbing, brown red hackle, darkish starling wing. Hooks Nos. 10 and 11.

The green drake.—This very noted fly is dressed in many different ways. It varies in shade and colour a good deal on various rivers; on some the wings are the palest yellowish green, or greenish yellow, and they vary from this down to a dark bluish olive, the legs, bodies, and tails, even, varying equally. It is difficult, therefore, to give any particular dressing that will suit more than a few rivers of a certainty. I shall give the fly which I use the most of, and I shall leave the angler or dresser to vary it as much as he chooses. First whip on the tail three strands of a cock pheasant's tail feather, and then tie in by the tip on the back of the fly an olive or a sandy red hackle, half way down the hook, and leave it hanging. The colour of the green drake's body is in nothing so well represented as in a slip of straw or a bit of maize leaf, such as is used by Spaniards for cigarettes. I therefore make most of my May fly bodies of this, by cutting off a slip just big enough to roll on the hook for the body; as the tail end is pointed, a wedge or two should be cut out of the lower end to enable it to be drawn to a point, which is done by two or three laps of burnt sienna-coloured silk, which is then touched with varnish to secure it, and give it the colour which is seen at the tail of the natural fly in a splotch of brown. The straw, being secured at the tail end, and the edges brought neatly together up the back, should then be bound on firmly by ribs of the brown silk, carefully avoiding the olive hackle which is left hanging;

and having secured the straw body, wind on the olive hackle, and fasten it off just above the straw, and tie on the point of a bustard, florican, grey partridge, or breast of grey hen, or a bittern hackle; I like the bustard best, as being more like the Mayfly legs; in winding this on, the last turn is given so that one side of the hackle points turn upwards, representing the fore legs of the May fly, which always point in that direction. This is not a *sine quâ non*, but it is an additional similarity and is easy to do. The wings are two small drake feathers stained to the right colour, and here the angler may suit the colour to his fancy, greenish-yellow with a slight olive tinge, a most difficult colour to dye (so that it will stand), or a darker bluish olive tinge. It is as well to have both shades; some prefer the feathers of the Egyptian goose, and I like them if stained of the right colour; some like the summer duck, which is good for a change. There are a few feathers on a drake which are nearer to the dark back feathers, more of dingy freckled sort, and less regular in their markings, which I prefer to any, but there are only a few of them, and they are not easy to get; but, whichever be chosen, they must be tied on nearly upright and back to back, so as to spread out and support the fly upright on the water. The head may be made of two or three turns of bronzed peacock harl. This is the best pattern for a green drake I know of, and for floating, if the hook be not too heavy, cannot be beaten. Hammond, of Winchester, an excellent judge of flies in his day, used the speckled white partridge hackle instead of bustard, and a sandy red one below instead of olive, and a yellow or lemon coloured crewel body, though he latterly adopted straw on my recommendation. The eyed hooks made for this purpose by Mr. Hutchinson, of Kendal, do

exceedingly well. You can get them of any size. I always find the fish take the smaller sizes best, though they rise at the largest well.

The grey drake is the change undergone by the green drake when it casts its skin and becomes a perfect fly, and it is often a most capital change for the fish towards evening. The body, head, and tail should be made as before; the hackle should be a sandy red, or a rusty blue, the wings of the grey speckled drake's feather.

The black drake, which is the perfect male fly, is, I think, even a better fly still. It should be dressed a size smaller than the grey drake body, tail and head as before, but the hackle should be a silver grey with a black streak in the middle, with dark partridge at breast, and the wings should be of the close barred feather of the teal. I have had good sport with this fly toward the end of the May-fly season.

There are several other natural flies which are useful in various rivers; but, as I seldom use them myself, I don't give the dressing, but the angler can get them at the tackle maker's if he wants them. Among the best there is the oak fly, the cowdung, the ant flies, the gravel bed, the grannom, &c., &c. The blue, yellow, and olive duns have of late years become so muddled and mixed up, and the colours and times of appearance seem to vary and change so, that I find the best way to discount them is to dress three sorts of flies, which we call in Hampshire quills. There is first the blue quill, light and dark, two shades; the body is dressed with quill, the hackle blue, and the wing starling, lighter or darker to suit the shades. Then there is the olive quill, a great medicine of my friend, Mr. Marryatt's. Here the quill is stained either lightly or deeper; the

hackle is an olive either lighter or darker. You may have three shades, the wing lighter or darker as before; this runs into many shades of olive or yellow dun. The red quill, plain undyed quill, with a lighter or darker red hackle, wing lighter or darker as before. This will cover most of the duns except the brown or hare's ear. The iron blue and the little wee *sky blue* or *light dun*, with palest primrose body, hackle of the same, and the lightest possible wing. The quill commonly used is a single harl of green peacock eye stripped of its fluff. This rolls on in rings nicely, and makes a lovely body. If you want to dye it much a single strand from the wing of the condor—an old bird, it must be of a dozen years old—does better, but it does not strip well, and you have to pull the fluff off; adjutant does equally. You can stain these any colour. The quill bodies do not absorb moisture, and float nobly, and are thus a great advantage.

GENERAL FLIES.

The Francis may be made of any size from No. 6 to No. 10. Body, peacock harl, ribbed with copper coloured floss silk; legs, blue dun hackle; wings, two points of the same (freckled). It is a very good evening and rough weather fly. I have made great takes with it, and have heard of others from all parts of the world.

The Governor.—A capital fly, that kills all over the kingdom from May out. Body, bronze peacock harl, with two turns of yellow orange floss silk at the tail; red hackle and a bit of hen pheasant wing for wings. From 6 to 10.

The Coachman.—A very useful evening fly, kills well at dark in many places. Body and legs as before; wings, two slips of white goose or any fine white feather. Hook 8 to 11.

Wickham's fancy.—An excellent all day and nearly all season fly, not only in Hampshire, whence it sprung, but in many other streams. Body, gold tinsel; red hackle from head to tail, starling wing, light and dark, two shades. Hook 9 to 12.

Partridge and grouse hackles.—Two small flies, very useful at times, particularly on northern or moorland streams. A lemon silk, or orange silk body, with three turns of partridge or grouse hackle. Hooks 10 to 12.

The red and black palmers.—Very common and well-known flies, and very useful, particularly the former. They should have either peacock or black ostrich bodies, and red or black hackles. The black palmer sometimes is ribbed with silver. If, instead of a common red hackle, you substitute one with a black centre, you make

The Coch-y-bonddhu.—A noted fly in Wales, and useful in very many streams. The flies may be dressed of any size, from the largest to the smallest. I use this fly in preference to all others, as a *wet* fly, ribbed with fine gold wire, it kills in many streams nobly.

The Soldier palmer I have found a capital fly in many rivers, particularly when thickened with rain. It is often a good lake fly too. Body scarlet crewel ribbed with gold tinsel; red hackle. Hooks from 7 to 10.

With this list of flies the angler should kill anywhere. I myself use chiefly the duns all round, the spinners, the Governor, the Wickham, the alder, the sedge, the March brown, the quill gnats, the Francis, the Coch-y-bonddhu, the Coachman, the black gnat, and the drakes. I have different sizes of some of them, and I rarely want any other fly.

I find in fly-fishing that it is very useful to employ a

damping box—one constantly has to change flies, and unless the gut has been well soaked it is apt to crack at the knot; or it is very apt, if there is a little wind (particularly in your favour), to go at the head of the fly, and flick goes your fly to grass, and this is very trying if you happen to be short of the particular pattern the fish are fancying. There are various methods of keeping gut damp. Several machines have been invented more or less ingenious, but after all an old wax match box, one of those big ones about six or seven inches long, by three or four wide, does as well as anything. Get two sheets of flannel or soft felt to fit in the box, but about three-quarters of an inch shorter than the box; damp them well, but squeeze out actual wet, and lay the gut between the sheets. If there are flies to it, let them project just beyond, on the three-quarter inch space not filled by the flannel, &c., and when you put the box in your breast pocket keep this end uppermost, or you crush the flies; a cast line or two kept in soak is also useful.

If you use eyed hooks you only want coils of loose gut, and don't need to bother about flies, as you can pick out your fly and tie him on then and there. While speaking of eyed hooks I may as well go on with that subject. Eyed hooks for eels and for salmon flies are as old as the hills, but not so for trout. I had some many years ago with a gut eye tied on, but trout hooks with natural eyes to them were brought out first by Mr. Hall some years ago. At first I did not much like them, but further experience has changed my opinion very much, and now I am gradually having all my flies tied on them. In the first place if you keep ordinary flies for more than two seasons the gut is not trustworthy, it gets dry and brittle, and the fly is done

for; not so with the eyed hook, the fly will last for years and years, you can always tie on a fresh and new piece of gut; the same if the gut gets chafed or worn, and you can use stouter or finer gut as it suits you, and these are enormous advantages. But beyond all that there is a great advantage in the fact that you don't whip off one eyed hook for six of ordinary flies, and, as I use a double handed rod and very fine tackle and small flies, before I got the eyed hooks I used to whip them off by the dozen, so much so that if I was short of a killing pattern and there was any wind on, I got quite nervous in making a long cast for fear I should lose my only killer. Now, however, I have no such fears, I can flail away as I list, and only now and then does the magic "snap" announce that another good fellow has gone wrong. We anglers owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Hall, who has spent endless time and trouble in perfecting these hooks, for a 0 0 0 eyed hook is a marvel. You almost want a microscope to see it, but don't the fish come at them! My! Messrs. Hutchinson are the makers of these hooks, and have spent much time and labour over them, and the hooks (to us, at any rate) are worth it.

Though they dress their flies somewhat differently in Derbyshire, Cumberland, and the north, in some places tying them all with hackles only, &c., yet, if you observe them closely, you will find that they are very fair imitations of the duns, spinners, &c., which we use; still, the angler will always do well, if he comes into a new neighbourhood, and finds a pretty good local tyer, who is a fisherman too, to give his flies a trial. Long experience of a stream must teach a man something. If he cannot get on with them, then he can resort to his own, or he can try his own for a change. In mountain becks, the small red,

black and Soldier palmers, the black gnat, small March brown, blue and yellow duns, sand fly, with the partridge and grouse hackles, will kill from year's end to year's end.

For lakes I give a few flies which, with a slight variation, will kill all over the country. The bodies are nearly all crewel, or pig's wool, and the standard colours are red, yellow, orange, claret, black, and green, some of them ribbed with gold, and some with silver twist. The hackles commonly wedded to these are red, black, coch-y-bonddhu, and grouse, no others being used; the wings are teal, mallard, woodcock, and jay's wing, or a bit of black wild duck with a white tip. One of the best Scotch flies is known as

The Heckum-peckum.—The body is scarlet or lemon crewel, ribbed with silver twist and red hackle, and the black feather with a white tip from the wild mallard for wing.

The same body and hackle, with either teal or brown mallard, make an excellent fly. A green body, with a grouse or black hackle, with a teal or mallard wing, and gold twist is good.

Yellow or orange bodies, with gold tinsel, red hackles, and woodcock wing are also excellent.

Black bodies, silver twist, black hackles, and teal wing slaughter many.

Claret bodies, black hackle and jay, or teal, or woodcock wing, make a serviceable change. The March brown and hare's ear, and hare's ear and yellow are also very useful on lakes. These flies should be kept of two or even three sizes for favourites, to suit deep or shallow, rough, or smooth, the largest about a No. 6, down to No. 8.

In lake fishing a good boatman is not only half, but two-thirds of the battle. If the lake be of the usual character, with shallow shores and a deep centre, you drift along, with an occasional paddle from the man, in a moderate breeze, casting shorewards as you go. If the breeze be heavy, you either row head to it, or, drifting, you find it useful to have a rope or chain with a big stone, which, throwing over and dragging along the bottom, checks the too rapid pace of the boat.

In lakes where there are shallow bays, like Loch Awe, and where the water all over them is not more than from six to eight or ten feet deep, you may make two or three drifts or courses at different depths. As a rule, the water from six to twelve feet deep is the best place for the fish, though I have caught fish more than once with the fly in lakes where there was, perhaps, a hundred feet of water beneath them, but this is not done every day. In lakes like Loch Leven, where there are very large shallow portions of the lake, you can make very long drifts without much trouble. If there is not wind enough for the fly by casting, you will often get a few fish by trailing your flies with thirty or forty yards of line out, and a spinning minnow at such times gives a better chance than the fly. Row slowly, so as to keep your minnow or flies deep in the water. In some of the big Irish lakes they use cross lines for the trout. I cannot approve of it. You scratch and scare no end of fish; and as for sport, half the sport consists in disentangling your flies. I tried it once for curiosity, but didn't like it.

The one great ingredient in successful fly fishing, as in most other fishing, is patience. The man whose fly is always on the water has the best chance. I am a great sticker myself, and never like to give it up. There is

always a chance of a fish or two, no matter how hopeless it looks. You never know what may happen in fly-fishing. I have, scores and scores of times, seen a bit of luck at the last moment, which turned a bad day into a good one. The very last day that I fished last season was one of the best instances of this that has happened to me for a long time. There had been rain, and the water was coloured, and it was a cold blusterous day. A few small fish rose under the banks, of which I got a brace about ¾lb. each. Evening came on; I went to the most likely part of the stream—a corner below a mill; there I found the best rod in our club, who hadn't a fish. He had fished all the best places carefully, and had done nothing. It was getting towards dark, and he left for home. I walked with him for a chat for about half a mile, when I returned to the mill, my way lying in a different direction. When I left my friend I took down my cast and reeled up the line, though the rod was still together. I had a companion with me, who urged me to have another cast below the mill, as he knew there were some good fish there. It was the most hopeless chance to look at I ever saw—almost dark, bitterly cold and blusterous. I would have bet 50 to 1 against even a rise. I put up the line again and rose a fish at the first cast, and hooked him at the second. I hooked three fish at that corner in about twenty minutes, two of which were about 1½lb., and the other 3lb., besides rising and scratching two or three more. It was marvellous.

Don't be in too great a hurry to change the fly, and if your flies are a bad imitation of what is on the water, use some totally different fly. It is more likely to give you a fish or two, as it does not challenge comparison and suspicion. When you get hung up in a bush or tree,

always try persuasion and gentle means first; an attachment can often, in that way, be done away with, which force would only make firmer. When you must break, shorten your line as much as you can and pull steadily, and if your tackle and line be properly constituted you *should* only lose a fly. A stout bit of cord, some half-a-dozen yards long, coiled in the basket, is often very useful. You may either tie a small leaded grapnel or hook on to one end, or even a stone may do if you have not one. This thrown over a bough, that is out of reach will often be found useful in saving flies.

Trout grow very rapidly when the water and provision to be obtained are suitable to them, and they grow to a larger size in ponds, millheads, and such still, quiet, deep waters, than they do, as a rule, in rapid and shallower waters; and there are hundreds, and even thousands, of ponds in England, which now only carry a few worthless carp and roach, which, with a very little trouble, could be made to produce the finest possible trout. I have known many instances where this change has been advantageously made, and I have not, as yet, met with a single failure; and I hope that the time will come when trout will be as common as roach are round London.

CHAPTER IX.

GRAYLING FISHING.

THE GRAYLING (*Salmo thymallus*).

This fish, too, is not nearly so widely distributed as it deserves. Seeing how delightfully it prolongs one's fly-fishing season, even up to Christmas if the water be in order and the weather open, and when the fish themselves are in the finest condition, it has always appeared to me a most desirable fish to have in many of our trout streams. Grayling take a fly well, the same flies as are used for trout being suitable for grayling. The addition of a turn of gold tinsel, or a little tag or tail of red or orange floss silk, being a great additional attraction to grayling. There is a famous fly in Derbyshire called "the bumble," which succeeds admirably with grayling. The bodies are made of different coloured silks, orange or pink, with spirals of peacock harl up them, and hackles of silver grey or light dun, or of sandy red, and no wings. As they vary a good deal in the bodies, I cannot give a close description of the dressings. Grayling may be taken, and a good bag even made, when none are seen to rise at the natural fly. At such times the angler should try the deep still reaches, and fish well under the banks. Grayling rise very quickly from the bottom in such places. Grayling will often rise, and refuse even two or three times, and then take after all, which trout rarely do. The play of a

grayling frequently, in the more northern rivers, differs much from that of a trout. He tumbles and rolls about head over heels, and in a way that is often very trying, to the hold of the hook particularly, as he is much softer in the mouth than a trout. In the Hampshire rivers the grayling play far stronger, and often run and jump in a surprising manner, and they take longer to kill than a trout. Grayling will often take the fly under water, rising so quietly that you will scarcely see any rise or break of the water at all. It is desirable, therefore, to watch the line narrowly, and to strike whenever you think it stops or checks, and you will now and then be surprised, although there is no break in the water, to find a good grayling on the hook. For, as is often the case with trout, the big ones are very quiet risers.

All that has been said on fly fishing for trout may be more or less applied to grayling, and you may use two, and even three flies, more safely for grayling than you can for trout. They are less of weed runners, and, indeed, in their best season, there are much fewer weeds to get into. I have found a red hackle, with a green peacock harl body, and a short tag of bright red floss silk, to be one of the best flies you can put over a grayling, which, with a dark-winged olive dun for the first, and a willow fly for the second drop, is about as good a cast in October as you could put on the Teme and Lugg. A Wickham's fancy, too, does well, particularly with a landrail wing, and a silver bodied fly with blue hackle and light wing. For the rest any fly which is on the water of the dun species will prevail with the grayling. The grayling when dainty will take a dry fly well, but the ordinary method is to cast straight across, and let the fly sweep down round till it straightens below you, when repeat the cast.

The most slaughterous way, however, of fishing for grayling, particularly on the Shropshire streams, is with what is called the grasshopper. This is a pear-shaped lump of lead of small gooseberry size cast on to the shank of a No. 4 hook. This is twisted over with rows of green and yellow, and sometimes red wool; five or six gentles are then stuck on the hook, and the *thing* is cast into the water in a favourable eddy, and allowed to go to the bottom, when it is jerked up and down in a succession of short jumps all over the eddy, never being allowed to remain still. The moment you feel a touch, or the least obstruction, you strike smartly, and you ought, if well up to your work, to catch your fish.

When the bottom is first found, a very small quill float, which is fixed on the line, is set to show the depth, as a guide to the angler in his jumpifications. A pretty stiff cane rod is used, and the gut is tolerably stout —the hook so large that no time is wasted in playing the fish; as soon as he is hooked, you put a heavy strain on, and quickly haul him ashore. Prodigious takes are sometimes made in this fashion. I have heard of as much as 90lb. falling to one rod in a day. It is a coarse business altogether. Grayling spawn in April and May, and, I think, ought not to be taken before July, or even later on some streams. The largest grayling in the kingdom are found in the Itchen and Test, where I have caught them up to 4lb. weight, and, though a three-pounder is not caught every day, 2½lb. fish are common. They have increased greatly of late years, and some of these waters now abound with them.

CHAPTER X.

SALMON FISHING.

THE SALMON (*Salmo salar*).

Salmon fishing is justly considered the highest branch of the angler's art, and when we know that salmon occasionally are to be taken by the rod up to between 50lb. and 60lb. in weight, we may well wonder what sort of tackle is needed to subdue and draw to shore a fish of such size and power; and when we consider the nature of the water which the salmon constantly inhabits, the wonder may even be increased—tremendous currents, obstructed by huge rocks, being their common habitat. There is little need to dilate on the history of the salmon, but we must give a short sketch of it. So far as we know it, it leaves the sea and runs up the rivers to deposit its spawn, which it does from November to the end of January chiefly. The eggs, which are buried in the gravel, hatch in about eighty or ninety days, or thereabout. The small fry, in about a month or five weeks, when they have absorbed the umbilical sac which is appended to them at their first hatching, make their way out, and begin to seek for food. From this time they grow more or less rapidly as parr, and in about fourteen or fifteen months after birth a large proportion of them become smolts; up to that time they have

been nice little fish of five or six inches in length, and called parrs, having certain blotches or marks, called parr marks, on their sides, then they begin to change their scales, and put on a new silvery coat, which hides the parr marks, and makes the little fish appear the miniature salmon it is. These fish are then called smolts, and they migrate down the river to the sea about the month of May. Here they stay for a longer or shorter time, and grow very rapidly, being very eager feeders, and finding abundant food among the molluscs and fish fry of the ocean. At the end of three or four months some of these fish, increased to 3lb. or 4lb. in weight, come back to the river as grilse, and push their way up to the spawning beds, where they spawn for the first time. Many, however, do not return the same year, but stay another period of eight, ten, or twelve months, or more, in the sea, and come back greatly increased in size, often reaching 9lb., 10lb., or even 11lb. in weight. But all these fish, on their first return from the sea, are what are called grilse. They are more slender in shape, have a more forked tail, and their scales are more easily detached than is the case with mature salmon.

Some of the parr, however, do not always become smolts and migrate so soon. They remain in the river for another year, and a portion of them have been found to remain even two years before they make their first move. The grilse, having spawned, goes down to the sea again as a kelt, or spent fish, thin, and much deteriorated. And here, again, there is some irregularity about its return, some coming back mature salmon in a few months, and some staying on another season in the sea, when they come back mature fish, much increased in size. But the periods of these migrations are now known to be more or less uncer-

tain. Formerly it was believed that there was a regular stated time for them in all instances, and this led to much confusion and misunderstanding. Experiment, however, has taught us better. The salmon deposits a vast number of eggs, from 10,000 to 20,000, or more, and were it not for the number of enemies it has, and the reckless and improvident way it is dealt with by man, our rivers would literally swarm with them; as it is, however, scarcely a mature fish survives out of every thousand of eggs deposited. Salmon fishing commences on some rivers as early as February, and on some it continues as late as the end of November; most of these late fish, however, are very much out of condition.

The chief method of salmon fishing practised in Britain is with the fly; though minnow, shrimp, and even worm are used, and kill a large number of fish. We will, therefore, take fly fishing first. The rod and tackle used for the salmon is, of course, much larger and stouter than that employed for the trout. When the angler first takes to salmon fishing, he should take care not to overburthen himself with his rod, and, unless he is unusually strong, he will find a rod of 16ft. or 16½ft. long and heavy enough to commence with. After a season or a few month's practice, he may be able to use a longer and heavier one, and may go on to 19ft. or 20ft. or even more, but unless it be in exceptional water, he will very rarely need one of more than 18ft., and even 17ft. will be found large enough for any fish. The reel must be large enough to take 120 or 130 yards of eight plait dressed salmon line easily, so that there may be plenty of room in winding up; a plain winch, not too wide between the plates, and with a moderate check, just heavy enough to prevent the line overrunning, is the best. Multipliers are to be avoided in

salmon fishing, and, for that matter, in all fishing; the principle doesn't work, and, as in the old rhyme, it will be found that

Multiplication is vexation,

and, if it doesn't cause a "division" in "practice," it will certainly "make you mad." Eight-plait dressed silk line is the best, and of these lines none equal the London ones. Many other manufacturers have been tried, but they none of them stand so well as the London lines. Most of the other lines are plaited too tightly and closely, and the result is either that the dressing does not soak into the line, but, merely adhering to the outside, soon rubs and wears off, when they soon wear out (for few salmon lines will stand with advantage a second dressing), or the line has to be soaked so long in the composition, and dries so slowly that it becomes half rotten before it is dry, and full half its strength is lost and destroyed. The London lines,* however, are more loosely plaited, so that the composition used for dressing not only penetrates quickly throughout the fibre, but dries quickly too; and thus, though the outside may wear, the inside still retains sufficient for all purposes, and the line is less damaged by the immersion. These lines, however, are expensive, 3*d.* a yard being the ordinary price; and this has induced other makers to fabricate lines of cotton, hemp, and other materials on the same plan, but at a much cheaper rate. Some of these lines are found to answer well; but, if I can get a good trustworthy London eight plait silk line I prefer it to all others, and do not think the extra expense thrown away. I have had lines of this sort which I have used for many

* Whether these lines are made in London or no I cannot say.

years, and which are as strong and trustworthy as they were when I bought them. When a line begins to go, however, it should be well tested *when wet*, as lines are often much weaker when they are wet than when they are dry, and all that is at all unsound should be broken off and cast aside.

Any line of from eighty yards long and upwards may be turned end for end when one end begins to show signs of weakness, but even then the weaker portion should be broken off, as it is always unsafe; and it is better to lash it on to a length of common undressed stuff, which will answer all the purposes of a long run, which will happen now and then with a salmon, than to trust to any weak part. Thus, in a line of that length you get two lines or rather two lengths which you could hardly get out of a shorter line, as in the run you would so soon get into the worn part with a shorter line. It is as well to have the cast eight or ten yards tapered so as to meet the casting line, as this makes perfectly straight casting so much easier and more certain. If more than this is tapered, as is too often the case, it makes the line too light to go well through the wind.

Rod, reel, and line being settled on, we next come to the casting line: I usually employ for this about one yard of treble-twisted and one of double-twisted gut, and about two yards or two and a half of good round sound carefully tied single salmon gut. You cannot be too particular in looking at all the joints and junctions in your casting line. Every knot should be regarded with scrupulous care, as if the gut is new, sound, and good as it ought to be, if a salmon breaks away it is nineteen times out of twenty one of the knots that gives. The "double barrel" knot shown at Fig. 2, Plate 4, in tackle making is the best and

most safe for salmon casting lines; it is a little bigger and coarser than the single, but with stout gut the single will sometimes slip, and the double may be made fairly neat if the threads of gut are arranged so as to lie flat and level, and not ride over one another. It is as well to have a sound well-lashed loop at each end of the casting line; one for the running line to be fastened on to, which should be done with a single hitch knot; at the other end the fly should be looped on, a loop being also made for the purpose in the thread of gut fixed to the fly.

Salmon flies are mostly tied on loops or eyes, either of single or twisted gut, or in some instances a loop or eye is made in the end of the shank of the hook. The simplest and easiest way is to tie a long loop with a double or a single slip knot, whichever the angler prefers. I find the single secure enough if properly soaked, but some prefer the double. Push the bight of the slip loop through loop or eye on the hook so far as to be able to pass the whole of the fly through the loop; then draw the slip knot home down to the eye and jam it tight: and, having looped the fly on to the cast, you are all ready to begin. On reaching the river side the casting is done exactly as in the case of a double-handed trout fly rod. If you are fishing with your left shoulder to the stream, you should cast from your left shoulder left hand uppermost; if with the right, from the right. This is desirable, as you hang the fly better in the stream, and that is, as old fishers will tell you, a point of no slight importance, a very little practice makes it immaterial which you use. You must cast across the stream and somewhat down stream, allowing the fly to go down stream until it is straight down from the top of the rod, and working the fly more or less by alternately raising and dropping the point of the rod as you do so.

This makes the fly advance and retreat, giving to every feather a life-like motion, and precisely the sort of motion evinced by the shrimps and other marine creatures on which the salmon feed largely in the sea, and it is supposed to be very attractive to the salmon. When the line comes straight down it should be withdrawn after two or three jerks, and another cast made.

Never use too much power in casting; it is not only not necessary but it is injurious, you cast the line with the top and half the second joint, and very little force suffices to bring this into play. If you use more, all the effect is to bring the lower part of the rod into action, which has very little spring compared with the top of it. Try how little force you can use (not how much) to get the line out, and you will be surprised how little is really needed to send a straight line out. The tremendous "whoosh" that one often hears from a salmon rod is quite unnecessary and even objectionable. Thirty yards is a very good cast; the most I could ever manage was 34½ yards, and I have done that two or three times and measured it. The most I ever saw cast was 38 yards, but Pat Hearns* has cast over 43 yards. I never heard of anyone else doing it. It is never necessary to fish over the same cast twice, unless you have some special reason for it. Take a short step between each cast so that you leave from two to three feet between every cast, and thus you will not miss an inch of the water. Though you may now and then once in a way cast up stream and work down it is a very rare case to get a rise from a salmon thus. Here and there you may seem to do so and get a rise, but you will frequently find that there is a great eddy at the spot

* Lately dead, poor old Pat!

where the stream really is working up; and the salmon always lies head to the stream, so that you will have been fishing in the proper direction to rise him. Enough attention is not paid to this, as eddies, particularly below waterfalls or at the head of heavy streams, are very common, and their direction is not sufficiently borne in mind.

When a salmon rises there are three ways of knowing it, you either see a part or nearly the whole of his body, as he rolls over at the fly, or you see a large break or boil in the water as he turns at it; or you see nothing at all, but feel a touch more or less smart; this is often very gentle indeed, for a 20lb. salmon will frequently come so softly and gently at the fly as scarcely to move the point of the rod, and you would think that it was hardly a three-ounce troutling. When you see the aforesaid body of the fish, or the big break or boil, you may raise the point of the rod pretty steadily and leisurely; but, when you feel the touch under water, you must strike instantly and pretty smartly, as the fish is a shy one, and has taken the hook very gingerly, and if not hit at once will drop it directly. Many people say that you should never strike till you feel the fish, because it will often happen that a fish in his eagerness misses the fly, when, if it is not pulled away from him, he will turn and seize it; whereas, if you snatch it away, he will get alarmed, and go down sulky, and will not rise again; and I must say that I have seen this happen on several occasions. But it is by no means easy (for a young hand more particularly) to avoid striking when he sees the head and shoulders or the break of a good fish.

But there is another point of view to be considered, and that is that fish very frequently rise false, and come at

the hook with their mouths shut, or roll over, or smack at the fly with their tails. These fish do not mean taking; they rise for frolicsomeness, or from some other reason, but they will not take; and yet it frequently happens that if you strike at such fish the hook comes over or against some part of the head, body, or fins, and hooks them foul, and you get the best runs and most obstinate fights out of foul-hooked fish, though I would only whisper the fact; and these fish you certainly would not hook at all if you didn't strike or waited till you felt them, and it is quite certain that the number of fish is much greater which you hook in this way than of those which take the fly after missing it if you don't strike. On the whole, therefore, in the long run, the angler will find that it pays better to strike than not to. As to the theory about pulling the fly away from a fish before he can take it, or has time to do so, that is only possible when you are standing on a high bank, or rock, or bridge, and see the fish coming from the bottom, at such times you are very apt to do it; but as for doing so when you see the rise or break from the level, it is all nonsense. The fish has the fly by that time (bar bungles, of which, as I have said, there are but few) if he means to have it.

If fish are rising very shyly, fish slow, and sink the fly—many a fish will take a foot under water who will only make a boil at a fly on the surface. If the water is very clear and fine, plenty of single gut of sea-trout size with small flies may answer. In trying a shy fish, go slowly over him; go quickly; go with big violent jerks; go with very slight ones—some like a steady draw without any, and Mr. Colquhoun recommends simply winding up the line over the throw as a last expedient. All these and any other plans you can think

of may be tried over a dull fish, and oftentimes in vain; he has tasted steel before, and is mistrustful of toppings and tinsel.

If you do not know a river it is always most desirable to have someone with you who does. It is not always easy to tell which are salmon casts and which not on a biggish river; and you may waste much time on the part of a cast which is of little value, and scamp that which should be fished inch by inch. If you see any stones or sticks stuck in any unnatural or unusual position, or any cuts in the turf, &c., on the bank of a salmon pool, go gingerly opposite that; ten to one it is a mark to note some fish that has risen to some former angler, and which has not yet been accounted for.

When you hook a salmon play him as well as you can. For some minutes he will play you most likely; but when he begins to calm down you may begin to alter the *rôle* a little. It is of no use trying to check a salmon in his first two or three runs; but as his trips become shorter and more laboured, let the line go out grudgingly, so that he may have a good dead weight to pull against. In the earlier part of the struggle all you can do perhaps is—supposing the fish is running up or down, and there be danger ahead—to take it in time, and by a little pressure, and a gentle slant of the head, to run him clear of it. To this end the instant you hook your fish, if you do not know the pool well, look round and take stock of all the difficulties you have to contend with, so as to know well beforehand what you want to do. Always keep a tight line; never let any slack hang about anywhere. If a fish airs himself or jumps, drop the point of the rod, and give to him all the line you can, so that it may be slack when he falls in the water again; but as soon as he is under

water once more recover your strain. Always keep level with or opposite to your fish, and do not let him get further below or above you than you can help, as it is apt to drown the line; and if the fish turns suddenly, you may have a lot of loose line in the water, and the fish careering about at his pleasure. When he begins to run short, look out for a suitable landing-place where you can bring the fish close in, and where he can be either netted or gaffed from; never dash at a fish in gaffing, but wait until he is well within reach, extend the gaff beyond him (as near the tail as you can make sure of, so as to spoil the fish as little as possible), and with a quick stroke and a drag, send the point well into him, and *haul him out at once*, letting him hang a dead weight on the hook (the gaff being held perpendicularly) as you lift him out of the water, get him in a safe place, and knock him on the head at once.

If you have not a gaff or net, you must tail him out. Find a shelving, sandy, gravelly bit of shore, and as the fish turns on his side beaten, draw him up gently into the shallow water, when your assistant should go behind him, grip him firmly by the small of the tail, and "run him in." If you have no basket nor bag to put your fish in, get a piece of stoutish string, tie one end tightly round the small of the tail, put the other end through the gills, out through the mouth, drawing the fish up to the best part of a circle, with about a foot of string between head and tail, and tie off. If you then take four inches of a round stick, and take a turn of the string round it, you can carry the fish very conveniently, and without cutting your fingers with the string, any distance.

Although it is desirable to be able to make long casts at times, you should never use an inch more line than is abso-

lutely necessary, or you throw over and beyond your cast, and so lose power, having more or less a bagged line when you come on to it, and if your rod is upright, and your line bagged, and a fish happens to rise, as they will sometimes at the last moment, you cannot strike your fish, and the chances are a scratch and a lose.

Always fish your best, and cast as if you were expecting a fish to rise at every cast. If you get listless and out of heart sit down and smoke till you grow keen again, but don't fish carelessly. It is ten to one that you lose your chance if you do. You have been fishing all day perhaps, and have not touched a fin. You are tired, out of heart, and careless. You've fished the best of the pool. The lower bit is never very good, only giving a fish once in a way. You have pitched your fly out, however, and, your cigar being out, you take the opportunity to strike a fuzee while holding the rod for a moment in your left hand, or you are doing something else equally imprudent, when suddenly you feel a touch at the rod point. You look up from the all-absorbing fuzee. "Ah! confound it, there he was just as I was——Oh, dem, dem, dem, he's gone; and, having had a good taste of the fly, will not come again for a day or two, and what a thundering big boil he made. I'll lay a sovereign that's the twenty-pounder Jones saw; and he said it was in this pool, too, but I thought it was further up. Oh, dem, dem, dem!" Why will you do two things at once? Isn't salmon fishing enough for anyone? There is nothing more common than to fish all day and do nothing, and to get your fish, or even two, towards evening.

Don't wade if you can do without, as, at the best, it is more or less rheumatic. If you must wade, use waterproofs and worsted under, and always turn them down

when not wading to let the air in and perspiration out. Don't wade a pool unless you know it well, or have someone with you who does, and always "gang warily;" a round stone or an unseen boulder may, if it does no worse, give you a hearty ducking, and if you are five or six miles from home, and no inn or house near, that is not worth while.

CHAPTER XI.

SALMON FLIES.

I now come to salmon flies. Of these I shall give a list of fourteen, which will suffice for all general work, and with which—regard being had to the size, depth and colour of the water, and the consequent size of the fly—fish should be killed anywhere. There are hundreds of varieties of flies used on the different rivers in Great Britain, and every river has its peculiar varieties. I always use the flies which are said by the local fishermen to kill best; but I have no space to give here a complete list of all these flies for each river. Salmon fishermen who are so far interested in their pursuit as to desire this, may find complete lists for every river and lake fully set forth and described in my "Book on Angling." But the labour and drudgery of compiling such a list is so great and so tedious that having done it twice I have no desire ever to go through it again. I here give a list of the flies under the names they are known by. The method of dressing them follows.

FOURTEEN SALMON FLIES.

The Butcher.	The Parson.
The Jock Scott.	The Namsen.
The Blue Doctor.	The Popham.
The Silver Doctor.	The Wasps.
The Black and Teal.	Thunder and Lightning.
The Orange and Grouse.	The Childers.
The Claret.	The Ranger.

With these flies in his book, suited in size and brilliance to the water, the angler need not fear to encounter any river. It will be seen, too, that with slight modifications of dressing, which I have suggested, perhaps double the number of patterns could be made. I will now give a brief description of the dressing of each fly.

The Butcher is, perhaps, one of the most general favourites with slight variations. It is dressed in many ways. The body is made of rough pig's wool. Beginning at the tail we have about one-fifth of the whole body composed of claret, then the same quantity of medium blue; ditto ditto red, and the rest of the body of dark blue; a reddish claret hackle with gallina at the shoulder; fine gold tinsel; an under wing of golden pheasant's ruff and rump, and a mixed upper wing of mallard, bustard, wood duck, dyed swan, &c., &c.: a topping for the tail; and the same may be added to the wing if you wish to make it extra gay. This fly may be used of any size.

The Jock Scott has grown greatly in favour of late years. In Scotland there is hardly any river which it will not kill on. The tail, one topping and a short Indian crow feather; the body is made of floss silk in two joints—the tail joint of golden yellow, the upper one of black. At the joint are tied in two or three small toucan points, with two turns of black ostrich harl; silver twist over the black joints, gold wire over the yellow; a black hackle with gallina over it; a mixed wing of white tip turkey, pintail, bustard, mallard, and dyed swan, with one topping; a short kingfisher feather on either shoulder; and blue macaw points. This fly ranges from a largish medium size downwards to sea trout size.

The Blue Doctor, another capital fly. Tail, a topping; over this a turn of bright scarlet crewel; body,

very pale blue silk; silver tinsel; on large flies double the tinsel or use silver twist alongside it; hackle, either a blue some shades darker, or a blue jay feather may be used, and over this, at the shoulder, a grouse, or a bustard hackle; mixed wing of bustard, dark turkey, Argus pheasant, and dyed swan; head, scarlet crewel. Some people omit the scarlet crewel at head and tail, and use the ordinary black ostrich harl; it is matter of taste and fancy. I don't think it influences the salmon much one way or the other. The fly is dressed large at times. I have seen very large ones used in the heavier casts in the Tummel, where it is the best fly by far that can be used; and they run down to sea trout size.

The Silver Doctor.—There is another fly somewhat similar to this called "the Wilkinson," which kills well in the Tweed and elsewhere. The doctor has a body of silver tinsel, with a topping for tail, and red crewel at the butt, as in the Blue Doctor; blue hackle, speckled gallina at the shoulder; and a wing chiefly of pintail with dyed swan, mixed fibres, a topping or two over, and red head. The "Wilkinson" has a similar body ribbed with silver thread; hackle and tail as in the Doctor, with a lake coloured hackle at shoulder; a mixed wing of bustard, wood duck, pintail, red and blue macaw, a topping over, and two kingfishers at the shoulders; with a black instead of a red head. The only real difference is in the wing and the shoulder hackle, which, possibly makes the fly a little more brilliant, and perhaps improves it. From medium to a moderate grilse size.

The Black and Teal is a capital fly, and kills almost anywhere. In small flies I make the body of black silk, and in larger ones, as it gets towards the shoulder, I throw in some black pig's wool; a topping for tail; with silver

twist for small, and tinsel for larger flies; a black hackle on half the body, and gallina (the large spotted feather) at the shoulder. In small flies I make the wing simply of a slip of teal; in larger ones I add doubled, or a long and short jungle cock on either side of it as well; and a small teal or black partridge feather for the under wing. You may add a topping if you like. This fly runs from something above medium size down to sea trout size. It is a good sea and lake trout fly also.

The Orange and Grouse.—This is a capital Irish fly, and will kill in more places than Ireland. Tail, a topping and small kingfisher feather; body, orange coloured floss silk, with a turn or two of lake floss at the tail end; silver tinsel; hackle, grouse with a bit of blue jay at shoulder. The hackle is usually clipped on the breast, and left long for the wing; but I do not like this plan, and prefer a wing of brown turkey of the same colour as the grouse hackle, with one topping, and blue macaw points. You may vary the blue jay at shoulder with any other colour; a long fibred black heron hackle, with a coch-y-bonddhu, instead of grouse, makes a good change, and you may put a bit of tippet in for an under wing. This fly should be dressed from a small medium size down to sea trout. The orange must not be too deep a red.

The Claret.—This fly is sometimes called the fiery brown. The colour of the body may be varied from a sort of brownish claret to reddish and almost to plum colour. The reddish or ordinary claret is the best, however. Tail, a topping; body, claret mohair, or seal's fur, with two or three turns of orange floss at the tail; gold twist; a dirty reddish claret hackle (a darker one for the darker bodies), with a black hackle at the shoulder; vary this with a blue jay; wing, a golden pheasant tippet feather for under

wing, the upper wing, mixed gold pheasant tail, brown turkey, pintail, and bustard, with a few fibres of red and green parrot, and blue macaw points. This is a very useful fly, and may be dressed from over medium size down to grilse size.

The Parson.—This is a very gay fly indeed, and is rather a name for any fly with a number of toppings in it than for any particular fly. It hails from the Erne in Ireland, one of the most charming salmon rivers I know of, and where I have had many a delightful day's sport; but if a striking showy fly is required, this is almost as good a basis as can be selected; Tail a topping, some tippet sprigs, and a short kingfisher feather; body, golden floss about three turns, then pig's wool of the same colour, changing into orange; silver twist; a golden olive hackle with a turn or two of orange over it, and lastly, a lake* hackle or blue jay in the shoulder, or in very showy flies a few short toppings are tied in at the breast. The wing varies according to the brilliancy of the fly—in very bright flies a single tippet, with cock of the rock (not the square feather), on either side, two strips of pintail and a lot of toppings—as many as the fly will carry—with two short kingfishers at the shoulders, and blue macaw points. In less showy flies, two golden pheasant saddle feathers over the tippet and less toppings, with a few sprigs of gold pheasant tail over the pintail, and no cock of the rock, does well—the toppings are sometimes tied on so as to curve upwards. Tie it about medium sizes.

The Namsen.—This fly is remarkable chiefly for the beautiful way in which the colours of the body are graduated from the tail to the shoulder. Taking that

* I don't know what they call this colour now, but it is a sort of red purple.

body for a basis, you may put any hackle and wing to it you like, but I do not think you can improve the body. Tail, a topping and a bit of red ibis; body, two turns of golden yellow pig's wool, changing into orange, and then into claret, and lastly into darkish blue; and you may add a twirl of black. The upper part of the body should be roughish, and picked out to serve as a hackle; silver and gold thread side by side, a black hackle on the shoulder; wing, slips of dark turkey, well marked bustard, bittern wing, and dyed swan fibres, various. Size medium.

The Popham.—This is a curious fly, but it has become a very general favourite of late years. The body is made in three equal joints of floss silk, the lowest of bright yellow, the middle one of medium blue, and the upper one of orange; at each joint is tied in two or three Indian crow feathers, with a turn of peacock harl over; fine gold twist; blue jay hackle at shoulder; tail, a topping; a mixed wing of golden pheasant tail and tippet, bustard, teal, and dyed swan fibres various, and one topping. From medium to grilse size.

The Wasps.—These are flies so named on the Tay, but they are merely the type of the old almost universal Scotch fly, which formerly, with a slight variation in the wing, was used, and is now, not only all over Scotland, but Wales as well. Varied slightly they are the most useful flies the angler can have in his book. The body is the main point, it is made of pig's wool, the lower half yellow, the upper of either medium, blue, black, or claret pig's wool, or you may graduate it with a few turns of orange or claret above the yellow; the hackles are mostly either coch-y-bonddhu or black, with or without a bit of gallina, jay, blue or claret, at the shoulder; tinsel, either silver or gold at will—tail *à discretion*. The wings are either of

cinnamon coloured turkey, or brown speckled turkey, or peacock wing, or (and this is a modern innovation) mixed, of gold pheasant tail and ruff, bustard, wood duck, and dyed swan. These flies may be dressed of any size, from three inches long down to sea trout size. With the black and yellow body, coch-y-bonddhu hackle, and brown turkey wing, I beat every fly I could put on the Usk last autumn, killing every fish I did kill with it, though I used many other flies. It is now called there the Usk Francis, though the fly is as old as the hills, or at least as salmon fishing.

The Thunder and Lightning.—A capital Irish fly first introduced on the Moy, but now much used also in Scotland, where it kills well. Tail a topping, black ostrich over; body, two turns of orange floss, the rest of black floss; gold tinsel; light orange hackle all the way down with blue jay at shoulder; wing dark brown mallard, one topping, blue macaw ribs; dark purple head. From medium to sea trout size.

The Childers.—This is another capital Scotch fly. I never did a great deal with it, but that is because I have used it but little. On all the northern rivers, however, it is indispensable. Tail a topping with some teal and tippet fibres; body yellow, orange, and dark reddish lake (it is a difficult colour to describe) pig's wool; broad gold tinsel; a reddish claret hackle and lightish blue or jay at the shoulder; wing darkish turkey, bustard, and gold pheasant tail, with dyed swan fibres, various. From above medium size down to grilse.

The Ranger.—There are two Rangers, the black and blue. The first has a topping for tail. Body two or three laps of bright yellow floss, then bright red and black pig's wool; silver twist and tinsel; or dark blue hackle with

black at the shoulder; wing doubled jungle cock feathers, some tippet, a topping blue macaw horns, and kingfisher's at the shoulders. Substitute blue pig's wool for the black and a gallina for a black hackle, and you have the blue Ranger.

CHAPTER XII.

ON TACKLE MAKING, &c.

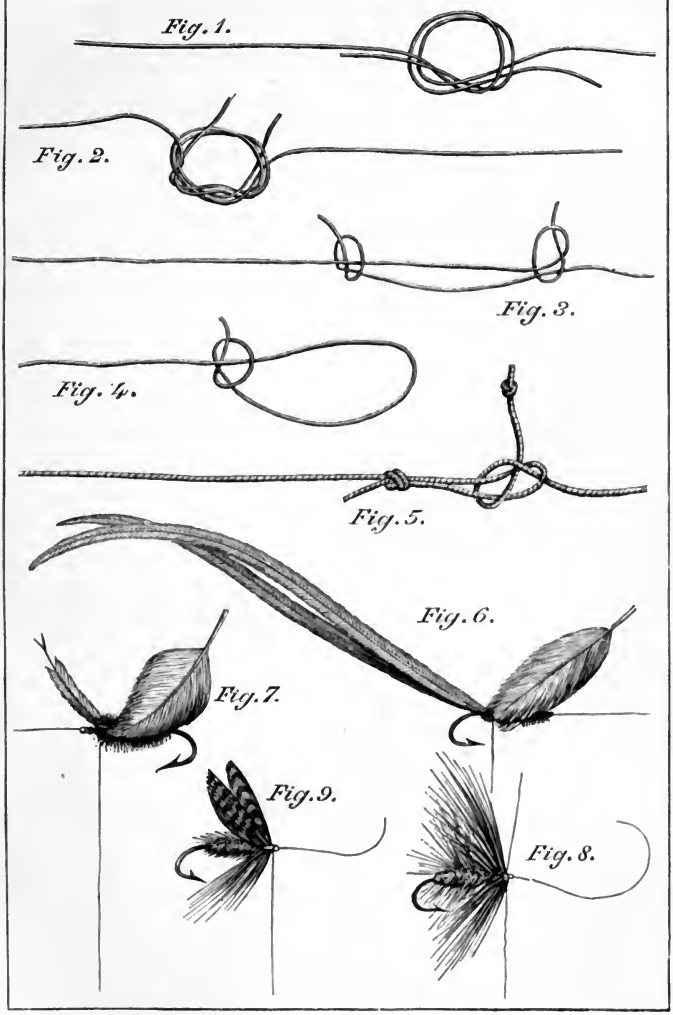
Tackle Making.—The first thing in tackle making is to be able to tie a hook and gut together. Take some fine tolerably strong waxed silk, using either cobbler's wax or white wax. If the colour of the silk is a matter of any moment, the white wax will be found the best. Select the hook and gut, lay the gut along the shank of the hook until it nearly, but not quite, reaches the bend, and lay the end of the waxed silk along with it and, holding both gut and silk in its place on the inside of the hook, twirl the silk round and round, laying every coil evenly and firmly side by side, until the whole of the gut is covered, when fasten off with a couple of hitches drawn tight. Touch the silk with varnish, and put it aside to dry. A little practice will enable the angler to do this with great quickness and certainty; but, before laying the gut to the shank of the hook, it is as well (particularly in smallish hooks) to bite, or indent with the teeth, the gut to be lashed over, as it gives an irregular surface to the silk and prevents it from slipping.

The next thing is to tie two ends of gut together so as to be able to make or lengthen a casting line or other tackle. On tying gut together you should always soak it first in lukewarm water—if you do not the knot never draws so close home, and is very apt to slip. If you have

no warm water at hand, place the ends in your mouth and keep them there for some minutes. There are two or three ways of tying strands of gut together, the first and simplest is by what I call the single barrel knot, as given in the first knot in Plate 4. Lay the ends of the gut alongside of one another for an inch and a half or two inches, take a coil round and pass the ends through; shorten the useless ends as much as you can so as to waste none, draw the knot as tight as you can and cut off the ends, unless you contemplate lashing them to the line with fine silk, as some people do, when leave about the sixth of an inch, and lash that, touching with varnish of course. I sometimes do this with the upper side of such a knot, when I want to tie on over it a dropper fly; in other cases I find it quite enough, with moderately fine gut, to pull tight when moist, to allow the knot to dry, and then having cut off the ends, touch it with varnish. It is ten to one against its slipping in any ordinary trial; but with stout salmon gut submitted to heavy strains such knots will sometime slip unless the ends are lashed. The stouter the gut the more liable it is to slip.

Many persons, to make quite sure, use the double barrel knot. This is the same fashion of knot, only the ends are passed twice through the coil, as shown in Fig. 2, and when drawn tight you must be careful to arrange the coils so that they lie nice and even, and no one rides over the other. There is another knot and a very good one—the double tie knot. Lay the gut ends together as before, take hold of one end and tie it round the opposite gut, then take the other end and do the same; pull the ties home, and then draw the ties together until they are quite firm and strong, and cut off the ends. This is shown in Fig. 3. Some people use this knot for fixing droppers:

PLATE 4.



they tie a knot at the end of the gut of the dropper, put it between the gut strands between the ties before they are drawn home together, and then when drawn home the knot in the dropper holds it. I don't approve of the plan. The only other knots or hitches worth notice are the single hitch, by which a running line without a loop can be fastened very quickly and simply to the casting line: when drawn home this is very secure. (See Fig. 4.) A double hitch can be made by returning the knot at the end of the running line again through the eye, so as to leave a bight of the line on one side of it and the knot end on the other. When this is drawn tight, the hitch can be undone instantaneously by a pull at the knot. The double slip, which is given at Fig. 5, is the double slip loop mentioned in fastening on salmon flies, the bight is pushed through the loop of the fly so far that the whole fly can be turned through it, the slip is drawn home and the end cut off. It is usually easy thus to take the fly off and put on another in the same way, though now and then the loop gets so jammed that it is not very easy to do so. These are all the knots that are really required by the angler.

The next point is how to tie a trout fly. The simplest form of trout fly is not difficult at all to learn. Of course practice is required to be able to do it neatly. The simplest form of fly is that of the plain hackle or palmer fly. It is fitted with more or less body, which has a hackle rolled over it till it resembles a small section of a bottle brush. In the north, where hackle flies are largely and in some instances almost exclusively used, only a few turns of the hackle are made at the head of the fly. In other flies—take chub flies for example—they are rolled thickly all up the body from tail to head. In most of the

winged flies, however, only about two or three turns are taken at the shoulder or breast, though there are several exceptions to this; but suppose we want to make a full dressed palmer of the chub fly pattern, we take two or three strands of harl, either of peacock, ostrich, or other feather, or a fragment of silk, wool, or other matter, and having whipped on the hook to the gut, and left a good end of silk hanging, we tie one end of the harl, &c., on to the lower end of the hook, just above the bend, tying in at the same time the tip of a hackle of suitable proportions. See Fig. 6, Plate 4. Then we roll the silk up to the head of the fly, as that is where we now want it; we then take hold of the harl—silk or wool—and roll it round the shank of the hook, coil after coil, till we reach the shoulders or head, where the lashing silk is, and with this we take a turn over the harl, &c., and a hitch to secure it; cut off the surplus harl, &c., and there is the body complete. (Fig. 7.) Then we take hold of the butt end of the hackle, and roll that on likewise in rather more open coils, taking care that the points of the hackle are kept clear and free, and not doubled up anyhow, all of a heap; and having in like fashion reached the head or shoulder, tie off the stump of the hackle with two or three tight turns and hitches; cut off all the refuse hackle, neatly press the fibres down in the direction they should point, pull out any that may have got doubled, so that they stand in their proper place, with a dubbing needle—this is a blunted carpet needle, fixed in a handle—blunted that it may not cut the silk; touch the head of the fly where the tying silk is with varnish, and there is your hackle or palmer fly complete. (Fig. 8.)

If you want a winged fly, you must leave a fragment of the hook unoccupied at the head, and pinching or pulling

off a fragment of feather from the wing of a starling, thrush, or other bird of the requisite size, and, holding the feather between the left finger and thumb, fit it carefully to the hook, so that it may not be too long or too short, and, having nipped in the butt end of the feather in the place where the tying silk should come, take three or four turns of it over that spot, and fasten off; and if you have managed it well, you will find the wing of the fly sit up well, and open in shape like unto the wing of a fly. If not, and the wing be askew or broken, you must humour it as well as you can, and make the best of it. Practice alone will put you on velvet here. Many tyers use a pair of wings. In this case you should pull pieces from both the bird's wings, so that they may sit well right and left. Having tied your wings on separate, then, with the dubbing needle, cut off stumps, touch with varnish, and all is finished. (Fig. 9.) In about eight or nine-tenths of the winged flies, however, the hackle is not carried all up the body. In this case, when you are carrying your silk up to the head, after tying in at the bend of the hook the end of the material which is to form the body, you do not tie in the tip of the hackle with it, but wait till the silk reaches half or two-thirds up the shank of the hook, and tie the tip of the hackle in there, when two or three turns suffice after the body is on, which is worked up to the head and past the hackle, carefully avoiding it in the process. If a tail is wanted, it usually consists of two or three points or strands of some hackle or other feather; they are whipped on above the bend of the hook, after it is lashed to the gut, before any other process is taken. If a spiral of tinsel be required, it is tied in at the bend at the same time as the body material; and after the body is wound

on, the tinsel is wound over it in open spirals, and tied off at the shoulder similarly.

There is one more process, and that is in case of a fur body being required, pick out your fur enough and to spare, lay it along the palm of your hand, as if you were depositing the tobacco for a cigarette; then roll it to and fro in just the same manner until it incorporates in a long thin roll. Then lay this against the waxed thread, and twirl the thread so as to whirl the fur round it, roll on silk and fur together up to the shoulder till the body is formed, when pull off the refuse fur, and fasten off the silk as usual. Then, with the dubbing needle, pick off all that is not needed, and work the body to the proper size and form. If the tyer wants his fly to be lightly legged, he can, by stripping one side of the hackle, and rolling on the other, have it as light as he pleases; but he must be careful to strip the right side of the hackle. A little experience, however, on all these points, and a few bungles, which he is sure to make, will soon teach him the right method, and there is nothing else he will learn so quickly or so soon from. The only lesson I ever had in fly tying was seeing a schoolfellow tie a palmer (such as it was, and it was rough enough in all conscience) hard on fifty years ago—all the rest I puzzled out myself. There are other ways of tying flies; some tie the wings on first, and work down to the tail, &c. &c.; but this is the simplest. Since I knew how to tie flies—particularly salmon flies—I have picked up a hint here and there, but the general method is much the same throughout. The great skill—quickness and precision of professional tyers is acquired from the habit of tying large orders of particular flies. For example, a man has an order for three or four dozen of "clarets." First he looks or fits out three dozen hooks

with loops; then three dozen small toppings for the tails. Then he looks out for a good quantity of claret seal's fur, with tinsel to match. Then three dozen claret hackle, three dozen jays, or black, or what-not for shoulders, and then he makes up three dozen piles of assorted wings. Having his various materials sorted out before him on the table, he begins and whips on his three dozen tails, one after the other; then three dozen bodies; then three dozen strips of tinsel and hackles to match; and, lastly, three dozen assorted wings. In this way, if any difficulty or error occurs in one body, hackle, or wing, &c., it is corrected by experience in the next, and the constant doing of the same thing gives wonderful dexterity and certainty, which an amateur can hardly obtain.

Now, one great object in tying a salmon fly is to leave nothing but the feathers, &c., it is tied with visible; all lashing and fixing materials should be concealed until the extreme head of the fly, where the loop is reached, when the least bit of the hook may be left to finish off the lashing. Consequently, as you finish off one operation, you cover the lashing of that finish with the material of the next operation. With the salmon fly, you begin, as in the trout fly, at the tail. Very many flies have what is called a tag. This is a turn or two of fine tinsel or thread, and the same of floss silk. First, you tie on the end of the tinsel, and work the tying silk back. Take two or three turns of the tinsel, and tie it off, tying on the end of the floss at the same time, and work that off in the same way. Then you tie on the tail, making it set as well as you can in a straight line with the hook, and curving delicately upwards. Having tied that on securely you may touch it with varnish. Then take a bit of the strongest ostrich harl you can find (black is usually employed), and tie the

end of that in over the stump of the tail. Take about three turns of that, taking care that the fibre of the harl points towards the tail. This is called the butt. It is not used in all flies by any means; but in many, and particularly where the bodies or the lower part of them are made of floss silk, it gives an elegant and brilliant finish to the fly. It is not at all indispensable, however. In tying or fastening off the butt, it is usual to tie on the floss or other material for the body; likewise the tinsel; and, if it runs all up the body, the hackle likewise. Work the silk back up to the shoulder of the fly, leaving a portion of the hook for the wing and head to be fitted on. The process then followed is just the same as in a trout fly. You roll on the body and tie it off at the shoulder. Then the tinsel, and then the hackle, following the spiral of the tinsel with the quill of the hackle, and fasten off at the shoulder. If the hackle is only needed at the shoulder or half way up the body, the tip must be tied on as you work the silk back; and it must, of course, be avoided in rolling on the body and tinsel.

Having now got on body, tinsel, and hackle, it often happens that you want a shoulder hackle. This is composed of some short feather, as a grouse, jay, bustard, or other hackle. You never want much of this; at most, not more than two or three turns. Now to make the hackle run even, you must compare the length of the fibres, and match them, cutting off all that is too short, then nicking the feather where you want to tie the quill in, and cutting off most of the hackle fibre, so as not to have too big a bunch of stuff to tie in the point you have thus fashioned. Work the silk back to the head, roll on the hackle two or three times round, taking care to make the fibres point straight and even with the others; then tie off the stump

firmly, and cut off all refuse, and touch the tie with varnish. If you use grouse, jay, or hackles of that class, it is best to strip off one side. Be careful that you take off the right one. In the jay hackle you will probably have to shave off some of the quill with a sharp penknife, as it is too thick at the stump to roll neatly. This is a delicate operation. It is always as well to let your varnish dry before fixing on the wing and head.

If you have what is called an underwing, which usually consists of one or two tippet or saddle feathers of the golden pheasant, or some other short showy feather, you must tie that on first, and the main wing you tie on over it. This will either be strips of some feather or a mixed wing of many fibres of various feathers. The strips you tie on right and left of the under wing, and it is by no means an easy thing to make them all set straight and well always. In the mixed wing you either select the various fibres and put them together before tying on, and then tie them on in bulk, or you tie on a few at a time. But all this experience will teach better than precept. Make a few bungles, my dear pupil, and try to rectify them, that is the way to learn; and beyond all you need not throw away your bungles in disgust. They will probably kill quite as well as the most perfect works of art.

One of the most successful fishermen I ever knew was one of the worst fly tyers, and he always fished with his own monstrosities. Awful things they were—"quite too utterly awful" in the *Lingua Haut-tonica* of the period. His hackles buzzed in all directions. His tails skewed, and his toppings stared enough to give a neat tyer the cold shivers, but the salmon liked 'em well enough somehow. There was a novelty about 'em, and my friend was

a very eminent sticker. I've known him stick for two or three hours over a fish, and work him with fly after fly till the fish, in desperation and to get rid of the nuisance, took it at last. My old friend was particular about colour and size, however; moreover, he used a long stretch of single gut, and that was all that he required, and I am inclined to think he was not far out.

Having got your wing on to the best of your ability, you may, if you please, mount it with a topping, or even two or more, and you may put what are called ribs, horns, or feelers of macaw points, or you may put cheek or shoulder feathers—which are short feathers of kingfisher, blue chatterer, or jungle cock—at the side; all these are mounted after the bulk of the wing is on; all these aids are more difficult to tie on straight and true than the other part of the wing, and nothing but practice will enable a fly tyer to put his wings on neatly. Having bound your wing on firmly, varnish the tie well, and lay it aside till dry; then take a bit of harl, crewel, or chenille, the last is the strongest, and preserves the fly best, tie the end on, wind it round over the stump of the wing once or twice, and tie it off to last fragment of hook, and this forms the head; take a turn or two on to the loop to make all secure, fasten off, and, finally, cut off the silk, varnish, and lay the fly by till it is wanted. If by that time the wing stands pretty firmly on the fly, and cannot be wobbled to and fro when handled, you may be satisfied. If you want to see how any particular salmon fly is tied, you must cut it up, beginning with the head, and having got to the silk under it, cut by cut until you work down to the tail, and you will then see pretty clearly how it is done. These directions on reading them over appear to me so clear and understandable, that I think the reader, if he

has any taste or appreciation of tackle making, can hardly miss his mark or lose his way. Some tyers use a vice, some trust altogether to their fingers. Where the fly is at all beyond the simplest, I generally use a vice myself, as it gives more freedom, and another pair of fingers as it were, and with two pair of spring pliers to hold the silk or the hackle in place, one ought to be able to get on in time—once master the method, however, and all the rest is a matter of practice.

Recipes.—I have mentioned—

White Wax.—This is made with a lump of resin, about one-sixth the quantity of beeswax, and one-eighth of tallow; melt them together in a pipkin; then pour out into cold water, and then work the mass about till it becomes quite pliable and tough in the fingers; lay it by for use.

Varnish is made of the best spirits of wine put into a bottle, and about half the quantity of broken up shellac; let it stand till all is taken up by the spirit, and when you use it, let it be quite dry before you put your tackle into the water, or it turns white and crumbles.

Cobbler's Wax, when it becomes too hard and brittle in cold weather, may be worked up before the fire with the smallest fragment of tallow, and will soon become quite soft and usable.

ADDENDA.

I HERE add a very useful little table compiled originally, or at any rate put forth, by Messrs. EATON and DELLER, of Crooked-lane. It may not be strictly accurate always, but it gives a fair approximation to what fishes of various lengths should weigh.

A TABLE OF APPROXIMATE WEIGHTS OF FISH ACCORDING TO THEIR LENGTH.

Length.	Weight.							
	Salmon.		Trout.		Grayling.		Pike.	
Inches.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.	lb.	oz.
9	.....		0	4¾	0	4½	....	
10	.....		0	6¾	0	6¾	....	
11	.....		0	9	0	9½	....	
12	....		0	11½	0	10¾	0	8½
13	....		0	14½	0	13½	0	11
14	....		1	1¾	1	1	0	13½
15	.....		1	6	1	5	1	0¾
16	.....		1	10½	1	9½	1	4½
17	.....		1	15¾	1	14½	1	8½
18	.....		2	6	2	5	1	13
19	.....		2	12½	2	10½	2	2
20	.....		3	4	3	1½	2	7½
21	.....		3	12¼	3	9½	2	13¾
22	.....		4	5½	4	2	3	4¾
23	.....		4	13½	4	11½	3	12¼
24	5	6¼	5	10½	5	5½	4	4½
25	6	1½	6	8¾	.....		4	13½
26	6	13¾	7	2½	.....		5	7¼
27	7	10¾	8	0	.....		6	1½
28	8	8¼	8	15	.....		6	13
29	9	8	9	14¾	.....		7	9
30	10	8	10	15	.....		8	6
31	11	9¾	.....		.....		9	3¾
32	12	12½	.....		.....		10	2½
33	14	0	.....		.....		11	2¾
34	15	5½	.....		.....		12	2¾
35	16	12	.....		.....		13	4½
36	18	3	.....		.....		14	7½
37	19	12	.....		.....		15	11½
38	21	6¼	.....		.....		17	0
39	23	2	.....		.....		18	6
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